THE

WANDERING PHILANTHROPIST;

OR,

LETTRES

FROM A CHINESE.

WRITTEN

DURING HIS RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.

DISCOVERED AND EDITED BY

GEORGE FOWLER,

Of Virginia.

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PREFACE.

IT is not necessary to state the accident by which the following letters fell into the Editor's hands. By many perhaps, they will be deemed a fiction. Be it so. I strive not to remove the error. But, what does it signify whether they be written by an American or an Antipode! Truth is the same from whosoever lips it may flow, and error or prejudice cease not to be such because we derive it from that circumscribed individual spot of the great globe which happened to give us birth. With respect to those individuals enveloped in national prejudice, or perverted by party animosity, should they take up this volume with an expectation of deriving any pleasure from the perusal, they must be disappointed. And can this circumstance

be supposed to give any mortification to the Editor! Oh no! Were the letters within the limit of the feelings of this contracted class of men, the Editor had much rather see them consigned to the flames than to see them published.

The plan of this production is not confined to the dry discussion of national topics, and if, in so diversified a subject, an author does not indulge the occasional excursions of fancy, it must be because he has no fancy at all.

That there are faults in this production the Editor will readily acknowledge, and that were he to relate the peculiar disadvantages under which it was written, it might afford an excuse to every impartial mind, yet he declines and even disdains all pretensions to apology..... Should the book meet with that degree of public attention to which the subject is entitled, and that degree of favor the execution may merit, his utmost

wishes will be gratified, but when he reflects on the invincible prejudices that have existed in this country against original productions, he confesses, with a sigh, that even this is beyond his expectation. Happy should it escape the indifference of a premature sentence, or obtain that degree of public investigation which can alone authorize a decision on any performance.

THE

WANDERING PHILANTHROPIST;

OR,

LETTERS FROM A CHINESE.

LETTER I.

IT has been some time, O! thou friend of my youth, since I landed in the country from which I now address you. I have made several excursions through different parts of it. I have visited its chief cities. I have seen its grand natural curiosities....its noblest rivers....its stupendous mountains....its awful precipices, and its dreadful cataracts. A youthful adventurer would be disposed to entertain you with a poetic description of these sublime scenes. But to me who hath visited every part of Europe, and grown old in the search of wisdom, such objects bear but a secondary consideration. It was as thou knowest, to study men and manners, to draw

my lessons from life itself that I left my native country to encounter the thousand difficulties incident to the nature of my undertaking.—The first reward of my labours is that of drawing instruction from scenes which others would pass over with indifference, my next pleasure, that of communicating my thoughts to thee, O guardian of my youth.

The country in which I now reside is that portion of the great continent of America known by the name of the United States.—This is the nation which boasts a superiority over every other, in the wisdom and liberty of its government; the mildness and equality of its laws, and its national justice and pacific policy. Having long been accustomed to those reflections which new and diversity of scenes suggest, many of my national prejudices are considerably diminished. I consider myself now rather a citizen of the world than of any particular spot or district. I can, therefore, view the government of this republick with an unprejudiced eye, and allow it the excellence which it really possesses. It is founded on the law of nature and the rights of man. It is calculated to promote the prosperity of the

whole, and secure the rights of each individual. If the government is properly administered it cannot fail to effect the desired object, and if improperly administered, it is subject to the check and controul of the people. It is calculated to inspire vigilance and caution in public men and to check ambition and expose incapacity. It defines the duties and limits the powers of the different classes of public men within which limitation they must act, and beyond which they cannot, dare not pass. It makes the same rule the measure of the conduct of those *in* power or those *out* of power, and in short secures to every individual the same rights and privileges. What more can a government aspire to? What more could a people possess or desire?

But, notwithstanding my real adoration of this form of government, I am inclined to doubt whether it is perfectly adopted to the fluctuating and intemperate disposition of man. Whilst I look upon it as the only kind of government in which human nature is not insulted, despised, oppressed, and degraded, I heave a sigh when I think it may not last. It

is said that these people encountered and endured all the difficulties of a long and bloody war to gain their independence: that they understand its blessings and will ever preserve them. It is true the love of liberty is at this time natural to this republick, so also was it to every republick that has heretofore existed, but this did not prevent them from sharing the fate to which their folly or infatuation impelled them. There are many things which men in their sober judgment esteem valuable, but which, from the intemperance of their nature, they can neither obtain nor when possessed of, preserve. The love of liberty is natural, so also is the love of life, the love of health, and yet we daily see men, by intemperance, injure the one and put an end to the other. Nations, like individuals, are in every age governed by the same principles, and subject to the same disasters.

But, whatever be the advantages or disadvantages of this form of government, it is certain the people are attached to it more from national prejudice than any real knowledge of its blessings. The sage framers of the American Constitution indeed understood

its excellence because they were not only men of learning and genius, but because they were particularly versed in politics, because they were under no previous political prejudice, and because they had reflected profoundly on each principle and feature of the government which, after mature deliberation, was adopted. But at the present day, and with respect to two thirds of the people, the case is totally different. They are attached to their government from national partiality, and for the same reason that a Briton is attached to his, or a subject of the most oppressive government is attached to his master. This is the foundation of all their zeal, and their opinions are founded on their zeal and not their zeal founded on opinions or tenets drawn from either reflection or study. Nothing, indeed, is more subtle than the science of politics and the discussions respecting the good or evil that may result from different forms of government: nothing requires a more profound knowledge of human nature, but the people here never advert to these facts. They would seldom be able to give any satisfactory answer to such questions as these.

Did you ever study the history of nations and draw from it your political creed? Did you ever seriously or profoundly study the various relations of politicks? Did you ever read any treatise on government? Did you ever read the constitution of your own country? To all these queries perhaps one half of the pretended politicians of this country would have to reply in the negative. No one can have any pretensions to the character of a lawyer or physician without having studied the branches belonging to these professions: but no such ingredient is thought necessary in politics. What can be the reason of this? Is it that there are no difficulties in the science of politics? Or is it that all necessary knowledge is derived from nature or possessed by inspiration?

From this statement of the scantiness of their knowledge you would suppose they were always desirous of acquiring information, and that they at least expressed their opinions with modesty and diffidence. But alas! it is precisely the reverse, and they are as much overburthened with zeal as they are deficient in knowledge. This republick, like all others,

has almost from its commencement been divided into two parties; each claiming the exclusive merits of patriotism, and branding the others as enemies to their country, as stupid, ignorant, obstinate, wicked, prejudiced, and a thousand such appellations too numerous to mention. The sacred light of reason is banished and forgotten, under the turbulent operation of illiberal passions. Each party display the most profound ignorance of human nature. They can make no distinction between the intentions of their opponents and their opinions, nor consider that the one may be honest whilst the other is erroneous. Each makes their own opinions the infallible measure of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood. Proud and infatuated beings, are not your opponents members of the same species and possessed of the same attributes....a part of the same community, and governed by the same interests? Do not *they* inherit the same good qualities which you do, and do not *you* inherit the same weakness which they do? Why then may not their intentions be as honest, their opinions as correct as yours? Are you more infallible in other respects and in

your general conduct? Why then are you so transcendantly above your competitors in the single department of politicks? Have they not the same capacities for acquiring information and the same means of obtaining it? Do not similar soil rear the same productions? Do not trees of the same species bear the same fruit, and similar flowers the same blossoms? Oh! renounce, then, your contracted prejudices and look not with an evil eye upon a man who differs from you in opinion.

It is remarkable, that when these people are discoursing in a *general* manner on political and religious toleration, their sentiments are liberal and expanded. I have often heard men professedly of either party deplore the violence of political zeal, whilst, if it was not such as their own, they would have no occasion to deplore it. When they are discoursing on general principles a foreigner would suppose that it was impossible but their sentiments would be tinged with the like liberality when they touched upon local subjects, or entered into detail, but to see the violence of their manner in these moments, he would suppose it was impossible that they could entertain a

liberal idea on any subject whatever. Now, my friend, what is the value of general principles except so far as they govern us on particular occasions, and in our practical conduct? What is the use of the compass except to enable the mariner to avoid rocks and shoals, and to govern him through every part of a voyage? What signifies professions without practice? Yet, this seems to be the nature of the human mind, not only on politicks, but every other subject. All men, for instance, will admit that justice, liberality, and economy are virtues, but when they would draw the limits to each, or descend into detail, there is always a clashing of opinion. When discoursing on general principles, or speaking in general terms, the different and peculiar ideas of each party lie dormant: when they descend to particulars they are called into action, and all their concomitants of pride, anger, and self-delusion enlisted in the contest.

The disputes of these people on politicks are like those of their farmers about their land: neither party would have more than his due, but the line by which this must be determined is a subject of eternal legal contention.

The party at this time the strongest are denominated *Republicans;* the other party bear the appellation of *Federalists.* The latter were formerly most numerous, but some unpopular acts of the last federal administration amply augmented the strength of the republican party, who now triumphantly carry every measure. Upon my first arrival here I spent an evening with a man attached to this party. He is hospitable and polite to strangers, and having understood that he was a *great politician,* I expected to gain some important political information from him. After some transient conversation on other subjects, I took occasion to ask him in what the difference of the creed of those parties consisted, and what the particular excellence of that of the party to which he professed himself attached. "Sir," said he, "the particular merit of the Republicans consist in a firm attachment to republican principles, and a constant desire to promote the best interests of their country. "But as to the Federalists it is difficult to say "what are their principles. Indeed I believe "they have none at all. They are no friends to "our constitution: gladly would they see it

" destroyed. They would besides render us " tributary to Britain ; to free us from whose " tyranny cost our brave fathers so much " blood and hardship." Is it possible ! exclaimed I, that any people can so far depart from their national character as to entertain such sentiments. But what, continued I, was the conduct of the federalists in the revolution ; and though party distinctions took place afterwards, yet the real patriotism of both parties must at this trying crisis have been fully displayed ? Did they shew any want of ardour in the common cause ? Did they not also shed their blood in defence of liberty ? Even the great Washington, he who led your armies triumphant through all their difficulties, was not he afterwards called a federalist, and can the purity of his principles be doubted ? Was not he the idol of the federal purity, and can it be supposed that they would worship one whose principles were in contradiction to their own ? As to their being hostile to the constitution, let us not too readily give way to ungenerous suspicions. What was the sentiments of the federalists on this subject when it was proposed for adoption, and when it ex-

cited so much agitation? Then was the time for them to have expressed their unequivocal opinions. Did they shew any hostility to it? Were they not, on the contrary, amongst its principal advocates? Did they not use their influence to gain its adoption? And was it not for this that they took the very name they bear? I only make these remarks to soften censure, and I believe the intention of both parties are honest, but..... My friend here interrupted me. He perceived, he said, that I was a federalist and it was in vain for us to hold any argument, as we should never come to an understanding: the longer we disputed the more widely we should differ. He added, that whatever might be the frailties of his own party, they were certainly all inferior to one unpardonable one of the federalists, which was their inveterate obstinacy and aversion to all fair discussion. In reply I told him he had certainly mistook my character, that I was no federalist nor republican....that I had little knowledge of these distinctions, and felt no interest in them, that I was a foreigner and felt favorably disposed both towards the government and the people. Little indeed, my friend, did I expect that my

innocent enquiries and remarks could have produced the irritation which I observed in my deluded host, or have led to such conclusions respecting myself. I was astonished to see all the gaiety and good humor which was natural to him, vanish in touching upon this gloomy and misterious subject. It convinced me, indeed, that men in the perfect possession of their intellects may, on particular points, be as completely deranged as the lunatic confined in a hospital. I endeavoured to draw the attention of my host from the obnoxious subject of politicks, and restore him to his natural state of intelligence and good humour, but it was in vain; and though he indicated some symptoms of politeness, it was evidently forced. I began to think it was time to withdraw, and took my hat and bid him good night.

I before mentioned that this nation prided itself on its national justice. This is, indeed, their most fervent opinion, but here, as in other respects they labour in a great measure under national delusion. It is remarkable that to nations, as well as to individuals, the maxim of an European poet is equally applicable, "the eye sees not itself."

In a government such as this, the administration must always, in a great degree take its colour from the prevailing temper of the people, which is often extravagant. The people is the source from which the legislative body derive their authority, and the latter consider it an essential part of their duty to adopt their policy to the wishes of the former. Every representative must study not only the interest but the temper of the district from which he is sent. In the national legislature, petitions from the people are received with great respect. Nothing is more common among its orators than to dwell in an emphatic manner on the feelings of the sovereign people, and nothing has more influence on their proceedings. Now, when rulers are thus constantly influenced by the people, it is no wonder that the policy of the former should often partake of the extravigance of the latter, and that they should be often led from their duty. Sometimes they will receive this impulse without being aware of it, and sometimes they will feel overawed and have to depart from the dictates of their own judgemnt. It is absurd to talk of the infallibility of the people, or their pacifick

disposition. The people are often impelled by extravagant passions. They are seldom governed by the enlightened dictates of philosophy. They are not capable of understanding fully the complicated matters of national misunderstanding. With an impatience natural to them, they feel only their own interest and view only one side of the question. They are not capable of tracing the interest of their country in all its bearings: or of seeing fully the consequences of measures which they would wish adopted. Their infatuation will often impel them to war, when both their honor and interest would dictate peace.

But besides these facts concerning the people, there are other arguments deduced from the nature of the human mind, which prove the deluded egotism of these people. What nation, or what legislature, I ask, then, is exempt from national pride, national prejudice, and the dictates of national interest? Public men, in their coolest moments of reflection, are no more exempt from the influence of these principles than the multitude. It matters not whether it be known to them or not. They are principles derived from

nature, confirmed by habit, and their influence is invariable and eternal. It may be that each party took up their claims which they conceived to be no more than just, but considering the force of national partiality, these claims, strictly and fairly speaking, should have been the *result* of negociation, and not negociation the result of these claims, but after having once been asserted it is felt a matter of national honor to maintain and defend them. At the time these claims are taken up it might be asked: Didst thou consider both sides of the question? Didst thou weigh the interest and honor of thy adversary as attentively as thou didst thy own? Wast thou then aware of all the arguments which he has since adduced, and did they occur to thee with the same force? It is evident that to all these queries the answer must be in the negative. It is no less certain that the negotiation which follows must receive a strong tinge from this previous partiality. It is precisely the case in discussion between nations, as it is between individuals. The mind of each party is somewhat in a state of ferment and actuated by delusive principles. Negotiation does not....cannot

always produce either reconciliation of differences or removal of prejudices, and error and envy very often tends to heighten both.

But though I smile at the national egotism of these people, I cannot deny them the tribute to which they are fairly entitled, and in their general conduct, and where they are not under the subtle delusions of intellect or of popular feeling, their conduct is ever magnanimous and just. Did every nation possess even an equal regard for justice two thirds of the miseries of war would be banished from the earth. Their national character has never been stained by violence, ambition, or treachery. They would only make use of their power to defend what they conceive to be their interest or their rights. These are the virtues of every rising republick. It is to be feared that this, like all others, will, in time, degenerate....that it will not always pursue the honorable career which it has commenced. A degeneracy in the history of nations takes place precisely as with individuals in their progress through life, and for the same reason. When a young man enters into the world he is as yet governed by the pure uncontaminated principles of

nature; but as he advances in life difficulties and temptations occur and he is still more and more led from the dictates of virtue. Every new breach lessens the remorse with which it is attended. till at last he becomes familiar with what at first he looked upon with horror. Just so it is with nations in their intercourse with others, and even their internal transactions. As they are involved in wars and troubles a thousand temptations occur; that high respect which they had been accustomed to feel for their national character is gradually abandoned, till at last a nation has no longer the virtuous pattern of their ancestors as a warning.

Whilst I, at this time, look upon this fair republick flourishing in its rising strength, and holding out the olive branch to every nation, I cannot but offer up to Heaven my fervent prayers for its perpetual welfare. Oh! linger, ye approaching days of internal corruption of gloomy change, disasters, and difficulties! Suffer, Oh fortune! one small portion of the great globe to be consecrated to virtue, and to justice, to be exempt from scenes of violence and blood. Ye rulers of America, persevere

in the happy course which ye have commenced. Consider your publick buildings as dedicated to virtue, and let none enter them who does not feel the sacred chill of the honorable, but awful, duties attached to his station. Oh! never let ambition, injustice, or treachery stain your councils. So shall the days of this enlightened republick be marked with real glory and perpetual prosperity, and heaven itself will look down with pleasure on the happy scene.

LETTER II.

This great continent, as thou already knowest, was discovered by Christopher Columbus, to whom the obscure republick of Genoa had the honour of giving birth. He was one of those rare characters who was inspired above the vulgar prejudices and contracted ideas of the age in which he lived. In His bosom first dawned the grand idea of discovering a New World, and with brave resolution he overcame every obstacle to its final execution. Astronomy was at that time little understood, and this knowledge confined to a few. Columbus, in reflecting on the figure and dimensions of the earth, concluded that the extent of Europe and Asia, bore but a small proportion to the real circumference, and that other lands might be discovered by sailing to the West. He knew that the only way to execute his design was to secure the patronage of some prince of the day, who would furnish him with a fleet for the intended expedition. He successively laid his plan

before different princes, frequently he appeared before them or those to whom the consideration of it was referred, and spoke with that bold confidence which great objects alone inspire, but ye sovereign potentates, ye pretended philosophers, it was not given to your contracted souls, to understand or to feel the noble enthusiasm that laboured in his bosom. For years he had to contend with ignorance and prejudice, and to answer a thousand captious objections....sometimes his soul lighted up with pleasing expectation, at others, hope was extinct. And in whom at last did he find a patron....in the breast of a woman....Queen Isabella....and whilst it reflects honour on her, it must add disgrace to her husband. From him, Columbus never received any cordial assistance. Indeed, my friend, I believe that in such cases as these, the heart of woman is more exempt from contracted prejudices, and that their generous and unsuspecting nature always incline them to the favorable side.

Columbus at last set sail in two indifferent vessels, and these but badly manned....he had to encounter innumerable difficulties, but his fortitude and prudence never forsook him;

He had the exquisite gratification of landing in the country which had so long been the object of his anxious thoughts. What joy must the first sight of land have inspired! With what exquisite gratification did he behold its fertile soil....its luxuriant vegetation! With what honest pride did he reflect that the doubts and prejudices of his country would, on his return, be dissipated, and that he would every where be hailed as the discoverer of a new world!

Columbus made several voyages to the countries he had discovered. He planted colonies, introduced wise regulations, and every where endeavored to win the good will of the natives by gentleness and insinuation. In his contract with Ferdinand he was to have extensive power over the countries he should discover; and a part of its profits, but this power he never abused. Under every difficulty, the mildness and fortitude of his character was conspicuous. But what was the return Columbus met with for his unparalleled services? What the means taken to assuage his mind for past anxiety and difficulty? Under unfounded suspicions, he is arrested in the

country which his enterprize discovered, put on board of a vessel, and sent to Spain in chains! Oh, ingratitude! Thou art indeed the worst of crimes.

The continent being now discovered, the great object was to plant colonies, accumulate gold, and spread destruction among the natives. In this the whites derived as little glory in the execution, as they did honor from their motives. What honor, what glory, could result from attacking with fire arms, those inoffensive people, who, with missive weapons, could hardly make any resistance, and where thousands were sure to be cut to pieces on the one side, and scarcely an individual lost on the other. Here was only brutal force without humanity, justice, or courage. Indeed, my friend, if we view these transactions divested of that pride and haughtiness with which civilized nations are too apt to look upon those less civilized, they open a scene of the most tremendous injustice and bloody oppression, that ever disgraced the earth. Were not the natives the only proprietors of this country? Did they not inherit it from their ancestors, and depend on it for

their food? If the territory of any civilized nation is invaded by another, is it not looked upon as a flagrant violation of national faith, and considered as ample ground for war? What right, I repeat, then, had the whites to seize the territory of those unoffending people, or to prescribe it within bounds of their own arbitrary pleasure? Was it to violate the sacred laws of justice, and riot in innocent blood, oh, ye cruel invaders, that ye left your native country and crossed the wide Atlantic?

The people of the United States surely, if they have any respect for those natural rights in others, which they are so highly jealous of themselves, must look with abhorrence on those bloody deeds in the settlement of the New World. What was the ground upon which they took up arms against the mother country? That their property was taken from them without their consent. This encroachment on their national rights, determined them to encounter all the troubles of a tedious and doubtful war. They thought it more honorable to part with their life than their independence. They said they would rely on the justice of heaven for the support of their cause.

Every individual who did not unite in the common cause, or shewed any hostility to it, was looked upon as a wretch worthy of the severest punishment. And was not the cause of the poor Indians, in opposing the rapacity of their invaders, equally just? Were they not also contending for their indubitable rights and interest? Upon what principle then can these bloody deeds be justified, except upon the maxim that "force is law"....which the haughtiness of civilized nations has heretofore ascribed only to the state of barbarity. When a man with arms in his hand has a right to murder one who can make no resistance; when the strong have a right to beat and oppress the weak; when the world shall get so depraved as to admit such maxims as these, then the bloody deeds of the Europeans, in the new world, may be justified, and not before.

The destructive arms of the Europeans, so different from any thing the natives had ever been accustomed to, spread terror amongst them. In some places they submitted without opposition, in others they made a vigorous resistance, but were always compelled to submit.

When the Spaniards landed and displayed their destroying power, the Indians looked upon them as angels, but in the horrid and bloody use which they afterwards made of this power, they must have appeared rather in the light of beings from the infernal regions. No wonder that their rapacity sometimes inspired the natives with a resentment above the influence of all fear, and forgetting their own inability, they rushed against the storm, regardless of the consequences. No wonder that they displayed a desperate intrepidity, which astonished their invaders; that they rushed upon them in such numbers as almost to overpower them or render them weary with slaughtering. No wonder that they looked around on the heaps of their dead and dying countrymen, with savage indifference, and with frantick fury turned the whole of their attention against their invaders. In one of those desperate engagements two young Indians of rank, observing the continued slaughter of their hapless countrymen, fastened a look in which their souls were mutually trsnsfused into each other, they sprung together towards the Spanish general, and seizing him drew

him after them to the battlements, determined to pull him from the top, contented to lose their own lives, provided they could destroy that of their oppressor, but the Spaniard disengaged himself, and the glorious youths fell martyrs to their country and to heroism, whilst tremendous oppression reigned above.

And what were the motives of all this waste of blood? The thirst of gold, and love of dominion; passions which confine the soul in the most grovelling ties of the earth, and which banish every generous feeling, which has rendered scenes of blood a delightful spectacle and the groans of dying agony musick to the ear.

Considering the immense disparity of power between the parties; the Indians certainly displayed, on many occasions, a bravery truly worthy of their cause. Had they had a historian to record their actions, we should be furnished with many brilliant examples of heroism. One of the Indian princes, after having displayed the most heroick exertions in defence of his country, was made a captive by the Spaniards. When he came into the presence of *Cortes*, the Spanish general, he

thus addressed him...." I have used my best " exertions for the defence of my country, " and now that I am your captive, take that " sword," pointing to one which Cortes wore, " and put an end to a life which is " useless to my country, and a burthen to " myself." His life was spared, but not reserved for a more honorable fate. Cortes was a brave commander, and had not shewn himself insensible to the feelings of humanity, but on this occasion, thirsting for gold, he resolved to put his brave captive and his chief favorite to the torture to extort from him a confession of the spot where his treasures had been hid. In the midst of their sufferings, the favorite casting an enquiring look towards his master, seemed to implore permission to make an acknowledgment; but the high-spirited prince, with a look of authority and contempt, cried, " Am I reposing on a bed " of flowers." The favorite overawed by this rebuke, persevered in his silence and expired under his tortures. Cortes, struck with the intrepidity of the prince, and ashamed of his own cruelty, released the suffering captive.

The same destruction of the Indians took place in the settling of North America. But here the Indians made a more vigorous resistance. It was with vast difficulty that the whites got settled with any degree of tranquility. But the Indians, never forgetting their wrongs, often rushed with savage ferocity on their invaders, whilst blood and terror marked their way. A vast portion of the original race of this great continent has been cut off, and in almost all the islands of the West Indies, wholly destroyed. The sufferings of this unhappy race of men are at an end. In North America their numbers are greatly reduced, but their condition is comparatively happy. I am glad to close this melancholy recital, by adverting to a more pleasing scene. The Indians in North America enjoy their liberty and have their limited territory which is never invaded. The people of the United States and their successive Presidents, Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, have strove to cultivate peace and confidence with them and not without success. Whenever any of their chiefs pass through the country, they are treated with marked hospitality. Trading houses

are established on the lines, and such articles as they stand in need of exchanged for the peltry which they procure by hunting. Emissaries have been sent among them to instruct them in the arts of civilized life. Several tribes are in a state of progressive improvement. It is to be hoped that the whole of this unhappy race will, before long, be brought to turn their attention to agricultural pursuits, and enjoy the benign influence of civilization.

LETTER III.

Moralists have always made a distinction between the profession and practice of man: between what he affirms of himself and what others are disposed to affirm of him. But the infatuation of the people of this country on the subject of politicks, prevents them from applying this rule, or making this distinction; and he who makes the loudest professions is looked upon as the best patriot. How often have I listened with a smile to these popular political strains, whilst I knew that the individual was not only deceiving the publick, but deceiving himself! How often have I heard men express the deepest detestation of tyranny or expatiate in the most luminous manner on the blessings of liberty, whom I knew to be destiture of the only materials of this virtue, and who in their family

exercised as complete tyranny as any despot of Europe! If such be their conduct in private life, would not such be their conduct in publick life? and if such be their conduct in either case, can they be supposed to have any real regard for the sacred rights of human nature, or to be entitled to the praise of republicans in the real sense of the word? Clergymen here are watched with the most scrupulous vigilance, and if in their practical conduct they depart in the smallest degree from the doctrine which they deliver in their black gown, they are looked upon as hypocrites. When we buy the wares of a trader we examine their quality and pay no attention to his interested recommendations. Why are not these self-evident maxims adopted here in politicks? It costs men nothing to find fault of publick proceedings or to make professions of political virtue themselves: they can claim no merit except when these virtues are actually felt and exercised. O ye deluded politicians full of blind zeal or empty declamation! how small is your political merit unless supported by the infallible and only criterian, the acts of your private life; ye who

can shock the feelings of a wife, or depart from the dictates of honour toward thy fellow men; who can exercise a wanton cruelty over helpless animals, or rob the harmless bird of an egg; how vainly do ye imagine that ye possess one spark of the only ingredient of political virtue!

For this reason I am surprised at a distinction which in this country is made between publick and private character. Is not man in both cases governed by the same principles of nature, and will not his conduct in either case take its colour from those qualities which are peculiar to himsesf? Does not the stream in both cases flow from the same source? Can a man in publick life be governed by qualities which he does not possess? He who would oppress his subjects, would oppress his family; he ho would rob the public coffers would rob a private purse. He who would overstep the limits of his power, or violate the law in a publick capacity, would violate the law in a private capacity. He who is fonder of the pomp of office than of attending to its duties, will in private life be fonder of procuring fine equipage

than of paying for it. He who is haughty in publick life, will be haughty in private life except when fawning for popularity. He who would infringe on the rights of the publick, would infringe on the rights of individuals. He who would violate a publick oath would violate a private contract. He who would abuse publick confidence would abuse private confidence; and he who would be ungrateful to his country would be ungrateful to his friend. He in short who is destitute of prudence, honor, humanity or integrity in public life, will be destitutute of the same qualities in private life.

The distinction made by the people of this country, to which I have adverted, must proceed upon the presumption that the private life of a publick candidate is no criterian from which to infer what will be his publick conduct. If this is not the case I cannot conceive that a republick, so highly jealous of its rights, would give up the important one of enquiring into the real character of publick candidates and would give no weight to their professions, whether publick or private. Neither have publick men any reason to com-

plain of such enquiry; for where the right belongs to the one party there can be no hardship to the other. When a candidate comes forward and lays claim to the confidence of the people, he incurs all the responsibility of the measure, and it is not only the right but the duty of the people to enquire into the justice of his pretensions. If he wishes to throw aside his private character and appear in a publick one, he is no better than he who having violated the law, assumes a new dress and name to prevent his being recognized, arrested and brought to the tribunal of justice. And what are the parts of his private life which should enter into consideration? Not his empty declamations, nor his continual echo of certain popular words which have no definite meaning, or which if they have, are neither felt nor understood. We should look to his general character and his conduct in situations of difficulty and temptation which required the exercise, and not the professions of virtue. If on all such occasions he has been governed by the principles of honor and humanity; if he has exercised the portion of private power he possessed with moderation

and discretion; if he has extended to merit however poor the hand of esteem, and dispised vice though surrounded by riches; and if to these qualifications are added the necessary mental acquirements; this man may safely be pronounced worthy of publick patronage and will not abuse it.

The private life of men is not only the most general test which we can have of his publick pretensions, but certainly the surest, and if skilfully consulted, can seldom mislead. Authors have remarked, that a short jest or a single expression will often exhibit the real character of a man in a stronger light than sieges or victories. Accordingly, the most skilful biographers have seized those incidents as indispensably necessary to convey a just idea of the characters they would describe, and when properly selected, not only display the skill of the biographer, but are most amusing to the reader. We love to view them in these moments of privacy and relaxation in which nature acts without restraint, and when every quality, good or bad, is fully exhibited. When, on the contrary, they are acting in publick life, or courting the suffrage of the people,

they often appear in a borrowed character. Their real qualifications lie hid from our view, and we see nothing but the exterior, and hear nothing but their professions. They are like an actor on the stage, who assumes a fictitious character and performs a part which his own nature could not aspire to.

It is not surprising that men who thus get into power by their party zeal, without principle, and their professions without practice, should often appear in a new character, and display a conduct in perfect contrast with what was expected. But it would not have been surprising if the publick inspection had been directed in the proper channel. They would infallibly have discovered in private life the dawnings of that character to which power now gives the full exercise. The character of men is not changed in an instant. Power does not alter the good or the bad; but only gives that exercise to the qualities of each, which before was not so fully displayed. It is a remark of some author whom I do not recollect, that the ingredients of the character which govern us through life, is in general formed at seven years of age, and this character is de-

veloped in every successive stage, and more particularly when possessed of power, or acting in the unrestrained situations of private life.

But how far from the rule which these observations would suggest, is that which governs the people of this infatuated country, in political matters! It is not the private virtues of a man, not even his acts in public life, which entitle him to publick confidence. What is it then? His attachment to the most popular party, and his professions to this purpose. And what is the peculiar fascination of these parties? What are the principles by which they are governed? No principle at all, and the facination exists in the individual and not in any mental or moral superiority of the party or the cause. How, then, are these principles, opinions, prejudices, or whatever you may call them, acquired? They are, in general, derived by the individual from his parents at an age when he is incapable of judging of their propriety, or perhaps even understanding them: they are kept alive and inflamed by mutual opposition. When an individual changes his tenets, he has been so long accustomed to view things in the mass, that he can

advert to no medium, but goes quite over to the other party....and in this his ardour is just as strong as it was in that he has left. Whenever such recantations happen, the individual is branded by the party he has deserted, as guilty of flagrant inconsistency. Deluded partizans! how much are ye mistaken! Think ye, that in this solitary instance of apparent inconsistency, he incurs the charge more than ye who make the proceedings of your party the measure of truth, and not truth the measure of the proceedings of your party; and who, from your blind attachment to men and not to principles, are, and ever must be, liable to continual inconsistencies! In the warmth of this zeal men of the most amiable virtues, and who would be equally amiable in publick life, are neglected for the uncharitable and violent partizan. Men of the most extensive information, or the finest talents stand no competition with beings so ignorant, that if you take certain political names out of their mouth they are scarcely able to utter an idea on any subject whatever. Veterans who have served their country long and faithfully, and who, in

the independence of their spirit are upon some publick measure, recognized in another party, are thrown aside and the upstart of yesterday taken in his place. To act independently is considered to act treacherously, and to act impartially to act dishonestly.

I have, perhaps, been led into the whole of these reflections by an adventure which I lately met with in the country. In one of my excursions through the state of Virginia, I stopt at the house of a farmer from whom I obtained a very welcome reception. I had introduced myself as a traveller, and at his request I was induced to stay a few days by way of relaxation. I had much conversation with him on topicks relative to the country in general, but politicks was the subject on which he most delighted to talk. I always listened to his effusions with attention, and without partaking in the conversation, only regarded his remarks as materials for my own reflection. Once at dinner, after having drank to the spirit of liberty he began a regular eulogium on its blessings...." You have travelled," said he, " through the countries of Europe, and " must have beheld, with a sigh, the op-

" pressed and degraded condition of human " nature. There you have seen the great " mass of the people labouring to support " a few. There a few proud and haughty " nobles look down with contempt on the " labouring poor; to whom they are, never- " theless, indebted for all their pomp. But " here, sir, the scene is different....a scene " which the enlightened friend of man may " contemplate with rapture. Our coun- " try is a school in which every foreigner " may learn the rights of human nature and " the wisdom of republican institutions.— " Here on the broadest basis".....The votary of liberty was here stopped by the entrance of a servant who approached him in an humble attitude and presented a note. The master took it in a hasty manner and spoke, " Why " sirrah, did you stay so long on this errand? " Did I not give you your orders? Have you " forgot the lacing I lately gave you on a si- " milar occasion?" The poor wretch, bend- ing in an humble manner, answered " Master " I proceeded with all the haste I could, but " the steward was in one of the outer fields, " and it was some time before I could find

" him out. It has not been half an hour" sweating and blowing from fatigue, " since I " got his answer." " Begone, villain, from " my presence," cried the master, " and let " me hear none of thy lying excuses." He now began his oration exactly where he had left off...." Here, on the broadest basis, every " man exercises the rights of human nature, " and enjoys the fruits of his own labour. " Here are no exclusive priviledges to any " proud or imperious individuals, but the laws " operate alike on all....they are as promiscu- " ously, or equally enjoyed as the light of the " sun, or the air which we breathe." The orator seemed to be now just getting into the spirit of his oration, and I know not how long it would have lasted had not one of the servants accidentally let fall a wine glass....the noise so startled and enraged the master that, seizing a stick which lay near him, he gave him several unmerciful strokes, and then, in a very discomposed manner took his seat. This gave an entire new turn to the mind of the master, and he seemed to have now entirely forgoten his oration. " These negroes," he began,

" are the most careless and ungrateful wretch-
" es in the world. They forget that they owe
" their clothing, food, and every thing to their
" master, and do nothing to deserve what is
" *given* them. They even forget that they
" are servants, and the obedience which they
" owe us. My *philosophy* is often put to the
" severest trial to bear with them. Some de-
" luded persons would have them set free....
" But they forget that it is impracticable, and
" such a measure would produce more *incon-*
" *venience* than they are aware of. Many
" who are now supported by their negroes
" would then have *to work for themselves.*
" This is a hardship to which we should not
" be reduced. Besides, negroes are in every
" respect inferior to the whites, and in these
" distinctions nature evidently designed they
" should be under our dominion."

LETTER IV.

I HAVE more than once O! thou friend of my heart, spoken of the political parties of this country, and the deplorable extravigance by which they are governed, but there is no evil without its concomitant good, and it would in fact be extremely difficult to determine whether this spirit is here productive of most good or evil. It is at once the bane and antidote of a republick: without a portion of it no republick can exist, and with too much it may be overwhelmed in destruction. The operation of this principle may be compared to the river Nile, which when flowing within proper bounds serves to fertilize the adjacent country and gives to vegitation all its charms; but overflowing these bounds is productive of ruin and desolation.

The spirit of party is here necessary at periods of publick election, in order to direct

the publick choice in such a manner as to exclude much difficulty. Each party makes choice of some conspicuous character whom they design to support, and this selection is made long before the period of election arrives. The union of the members of each party is so perfect, their sentiments so congenial, and their party interest so identified that the selection is spontaneous and undivided. Thus two men at least equally respectable in point of character and talents, but of different party opinions, are held up for publick choice, and he who gets the majority of votes is duly elected. But it is evident that this happy facility of election could not take place were it not for the salutary operation of party spirit. On the contrary the most serious difficulties would be the consequence, and the wheel of government perhaps entirely stop't. Men are so much governed by self-interest, so much engrossed in private concerns that a portion of party spirit is necessary to rouse the publick mind, to draw it from private concerns and give to it a due attention to publick objects. It was destined to supply the place of pure disinterested benevolence, and so far as it

answers this purpose it is valuable and salutary. Was it not for party zeal, publick elections in this country would be divested of all their importance. The publick mind would neither be sufficiently engaged in reflecting on the subject nor the publick attention directed to it in due time before its arrival. But the most fatal circumstance would be that where the attention of the nation was not, by the dividing influence of party spirit, directed to a moderate number of candidates; where the sentiments of each individual were detached, and known only to himself, a hundred candidates or none at all might be nominated. Indeed under such difficulty, I cannot perceive how an election could take place. To be duly elected the candidate must have a majority of votes of the whole nation or district; but where the publick suffrage is divided among so many it could not be fairly expressed and no particular candidate chosen. In publick deliberating bodies of a moderate number this difficulty may be obviated by frequent ballots continually dropping him who hasfewes votes, but when weadvertto a nation or district, the

difficulty seems to be insurmountable. But admitting that so many candidates might not be nominated, what reason is there in the nature of things to believe that the number would be few? By what land mark can the people be governed? or who in a republick can dictate to the people on a subject of such difficulty and delicacy? Neither can this point be settled by law. Let us suppose that a certain number of candidates, two or three, is limited by law. By whom, the question again recurs, are the particular characters to be pointed out, or the number prescribed? Or how is the voice of the sovreign people to be directed on the occasion. Thus we see that a republick divested of party spirit would be like a vessel deprived of its rudder, and driven in any and every direction.

Besides these most prominent advantages of party spirit, there are others equally inseparable from it. And each party operates as a check on the other. It rouses the people to exercise their rights, to enquire into publick proceedings. The movements of publick men are vigilantly watched and every fault exposed. They are thus restrained with-

in the bounds of duty, and despair of arriving at an ambitious power. It inspires them with vigilance and caution in every publick measure.

There is one beneficial operation of party spirit which perhaps deserves particular notice. A nation, in her intercourse with others, is too apt, on every subject of difference, to think her antagonist in the wrong. Her own honor and interest are felt with the keenest sensibility, whilst that of her opponent makes but a faint impression or none at all. All the arguments in favour of her own cause appear in aggravated colours, while those in favor of the cause of her adversary are always depreciated, or not at all adverted to. At such periods, the daring spirit of party exercises a free enquiry. It exhibits both sides of the question, and diffuses important information. It checks the infatuation of self-love, and brings a nation to recollect that she also is not infallible. By this means, she is often preserved from the calamities of war, or from the adoption of precipitate measures which would lead to it. By this means her national character is preserved and a conduct of moderation extended towards all nations.

From these considerations it appears, that a republick without party spirit would be like the tree without its portion of rain, in consequence of which it must not only lose its verdure, but languish and perish. This spirit is, nevertheless, at all times productive of its portion of evils, and when it rises into violence may overwhelm a government in distruction.

The welfare of a republick, and the existence of its government, depend entirely on the prudent and vigilant conduct of the people.... and this column removed the whole edifice tumbles into ruins. For this reason there is no argument against the republican government, so strong as the fluctuating and intemperate disposition of the people. Of all those principles which lead the publick mind astray, party spirit is, perhaps, the most prominent. It is the most inseperable evil of a republick, and productive of the most violent effects. It diffuses a spirit of infatuation, envelopes the human mind in one universal cloud of prejudice, and exhibits every topick of reflection in a distorted shape. Accidents add to the state of publick irritation, till at last the torrent is no longer to be restrained. In these disastrous times of publick delusion, there

are never wanting violent and ambitious men who are foremost to direct the storm. Convulsions arise and blood must flow. Ah! whither now is fled the boasted reason of man! Whither is fled those sparks of celestial intelligence which has measured the distance of the planets....determined their bulk....ascertained their relations....and fixed their orbits, while flying through the infinity of space. Behold the chief, the enlightened inhabitants of the earth engaged in murdering each other. Behold a nation once united and ready to oppose, with one feeling and one effort, any foreign aggression, now divided into infatuated parties, each striving to establish their power on the destruction of the other. And what does this prove but the unaccountable blindness of man....the weakness of his reason, and the force of his passions? These terrible effects arise not from earthquakes or storms, but from the bosom of man himself. Alas! by what blind infatuation are the human species governed! In what opposite lights is human nature presented to view! In one case we behold a man arraigned before the tribunal of justice for committing a single murder,

and condemned to the gallows for the crime; in another we behold a field groaning beneath mangled carcasses, and smoaking blood, and no tribunal to appeal to. Force is substituted for law, the murdering sword for the scales of justice, and the party that sheds most blood is that which claims all that justice could bestow. Ah let me turn from the unhappy picture. Let me endeavour to console myself in viewing the peaceful charms of nature.... the tranquil stream murmering over its bed, and gently flowing down its green and flowery banks....the variagated landscape, and the charming groves waving to and fro under the influence of gentle zephers. Let me view, at a distance, the innocent lambs skipping together on the green, they that never felt or dreamed of any malignant passion. Let me listen to the charming birds while they chaunt forth their notes from the grove. Let me view the painted ducks gently swimming up and down the smooth unruffled stream. Ah, amidst these peaceful scenes my heart feels content, and I can listen, with a tear of sympathy, to the plaintive cooing of the distant dove. Why, innocent warbler, are thy notes

so mournful! Has some accident disturbed thy peace? Hast thou been disappointed in thy love, and now solitary and alone vent thy sorrows to the rocks and woods.

From these beautiful scenes let me direct my thoughts to objects more sublime. Let me view that glorious luminary from which we all derive life and comfort, and which gives to the vegitable kingdoms, those charms upon which I gaze with delight. How unlike the fluctuating and intemperate disposition of man is this glorious object, always magnificent bright and uniform! From what source is its inexhaustable and ever flowing light supplied! Who can tell for how many ages it has dispersed its rays through the infinity of space! Who can count the ages of its existence, and how many it is still to exist, when every object of animal or vegetable life now on earth shall be no more. Perhaps it is eternal, and, like its omnipotent Creator, destined to shine forever.

LETTER V.

THERE are a species of publications in this country, commonly issued several times a week, and the object of which is to detail the news of the day, whether foreign or domestick, and generally contain remarks on these topicks by the editor. Internal events and public proceedings are viewed as objects of primary importance, and entitled to the first and highest consideration of the people. The press is regarded as the most powerful weapon against the encroachments of ambition or tyranny, and its liberty is looked upon as sacred and inviolable. Nothing would more completely rouse the indignation of the people than for publick men to make the smallest encroachment on this priviledge. Its licentiousness and liberty is considered as inseperable, and he who would seek to apply a remedy to the

one would immediately be thought to aim a blow at the other.

In all republicks this jealousy of rights is highly necessary and salutary ; and whenever this spirit becomes extinct, the people at once become the tools of ambitious tyrants. They cannot be too vigilant in watching the conduct of publick men, or too prompt in checking the first dawning of evil designs. They must preserve their rights while the publick men are their servants, and it is too late to attempt it when they are the servants of their publick men. That moral maxim which in the relations of private life, would teach us to put the best construction on every word or act of others, is not applicable to our judgment of publick proceedings, but the reverse is more prudent as well as more salutary. Ambitious designing men never let fall an expression which can exhibit their real character, or disclose their real intentions; they are constantly full of professions of their regard for the rights and welfare of the people: but all this time they are advancing step by step to the object of their ambition, while it is unknown to any one but themselves. They know it

will not do to attempt to exercise power before they possess it, but when once they gain it they know how to secure it as well as to exercise it. The people awake from their dream and find themselves slaves....they behold the ruins of their once adored liberty, and in its place a despotism rears its iron front. The prosperity of every republick, no doubt, depends much on the conduct of their publick men, but infinitely more on that of the people, and if ever their liberty is curtailed or destroyed, the fault is originally their own. For these reasons the great advantages of the liberty of the press are obvious. It is a perpetual tribunal before which publick characters are arraigned, and their acts exposed to the light, and constantly reminds them of that more alarming tribunal of law before which they may be called, and the vengeance of the people which awaits them for dishonest conduct. It is to be regretted, however, that these writers are in general so poorly qualified for the discharge of the important duties of their occupation, that their talents or information is so limitted, and this so much perverted by party spirit. In a former letter I endeavoured to shew that

this principle had a salutary tendency in a republick. There is no doubt, however, that a publick print conducted by an intelligent, independent, and candid writer would, at all times, do much good and diffuse much important information, were it not that the people themselves are so much under the influence of party spirit, that they are never disposed to encourage a paper of such a cast. The partizans on either side, however violent their zeal, take no paper but such as are consistent with their own opinions, and to expect to form correct opinions on political subjects from such aid is as absurd as to attempt to write a letter with the use of only half of the letters of their alphabet. A judge must hear the arguments and evidence on both sides of the question before he can be master of the subject, or give a correct decision. This maxim is, indeed, one of the most universal to which the mind of man is familiar, and we should be constantly exposed to error did we not advert to it. Why have these people made particular exception to this rule in the department of politicks? It is here, in fact, where it is most necessary. Why? Because the violence of their political

zeal is so apt to carry them beyond the bounds of reason, and because these party opinions are not derived from reflection or study, but from their parents and the impression of early years. This is an indubitable fact, and in a thousand instances there is scarcely one exception to it. The argument acquires additional strength when we reflect that the paper which is received, instead of being calculated to remove these prejudices, tends in every respect to confirm them, that the author, like the reader, being under the influence of party spirit, views every thing in a distorted shape ; that whatever comes from his pen is ever exaggerated, and that truth and falshood are so mixed that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. A man of the best intellects and the most moderate temper would have to exercise a vigilant reflection to separate the pure metal from the dross. But what great advantage can such a paper be to a reader whose mind is already sufficiently perverted, and who is inclined to believe, without discrimination, every thing that the author in the violence of his zeal may affirm.

There can be no doubt, however, that publick prints in a general point of view are of infinite service in every republick. It is, indeed, much to be regretted that the editors of them who might be the guardians of public liberty do not confine themselves within their province, and that the liberty of the press should be so much perverted by its licentiousness. But alas! how can it be otherwise when their own defects are those which are least known; when they mistake the violence of their zeal for publick patriotism and their malignant passions for a concern for the publick good? It is the business of one party to condemn every publick act, and that of the other to approve; and such is the force of party spirit that there is rarely any intermission or exception.—When any thing improper is done the opposition party are never tired of their invectives, but when any measure is adopted which exhibits publick men in a favorable light, the least which they do is to remain silent, but more generally to represent it in the blackest colours. It has been said that the rugged breast of the savage may be touched with the charms of virtue, but the more rugged breasts of

printers are insensible to those charms. When they can find nothing to blame in the publick conduct of publick officers, they descend into the acts of their private life, and when they cannot alienate the affections of their country they would wish to alienate the affections of their friends. The honesty of the motive and the difficulty of the crisis never soften the violence of their invective, while the good that results from publick proceedings is sought for in any source rather than the wisdom or virtue of publick men. On the fairest characters they diffuse the die of their own hateful passions, and then cry aloud to the world to behold the deformity of the object which has made so much noise. They are like the callous wretch who, insensible to the charms of a Venus De Medecis, would besmere it over with dirt or filth. And who are these who assume this high province over the greatest characters in the country? Are they beings possessed of supernatural talents and virtues? Oh no! If this was the case their conduct would be very different. They are no more to be compared to the characters they abuse than the stars are to the sun in whose blaze they are lost and

obscured. They are in many instances equally deficient in talents and information, and know nothing of politicks except the names. They are contemptible in every point of view but still more so in their professional pursuits and that in which they assume most self importance. They are the reverse of what they ought to be, and the shadows of what they pretend to be.

There is a particular custom among these Printers, which I cannot but notice, and this is crouding their composition with words, expressions, and sentences in Italick letters, or letters distinguished from the rest, thereby begging their readers not to pass them over without weighing their importance. This is an artifice like that of a trader affixing labels in praise of his articles, as if he thought people so easily imposed on as to judge from such inscriptions without examining the quality of the article itself. If the idea, or any part of it be striking, it does not require the aid of new type to give it its proper effect, and if it is dull it cannot be rendered bright from this circumstance. It is a miserable expedient to supply, or rather to conceal on paper,

the vacancies in the mind of the writer, and without answering any good only serves to expose his vanity. I thought that words were only the signs of our ideas, that they could not alter them, and that it is perfectly immaterial by what characters they be conveyed, so as they are understood. If the reader can be attracted by the novelty of type he is as silly as the writer is vain. He displays the folly of him who wearies himself in digging for a gold mine, because he discovered the transient glitter of a piece of iron ore.

Perhaps in these remarks on the printers of newspapers, I have gone too far, and though they are, in general, true, there are certainly men who afford prominent exceptions.—There are members of this profession who are not only well acquainted with its duties and the politicks of their country, but who are possessed of general learning and information. They seldom, however, possess sufficient independence of judgment to acknowledge that talents and frailties belong to both parties, and that their own party is sometimes in the wrong and the other sometimes in the right.

LETTER VI.

PROVIDENCE, O thou friend of my heart! seems to have destined this country for some important purpose, and has given it every natural and political advantage. Perhaps no nation on earth, not even China itself can compare with it in several respects. Its first and most prominent advantage is its remote situation from the convulsions of the European world which amidst all its splendid improvements in the arts and sciences, ever has been and probably ever will be the theatre of wars carried on with a more deep rooted rivalship and hatred, and with more disasterous consequences than is to be found among the most barbarous tribes. A vast ocean at once unites and divides this republick from Europe, and whilst it enjoys the blessings of a commercial intercourse with that portion of the world, it is placed beyond the disasters of its never end-

ing wars. It has still less to fear from the feeble colonies, or the barbarian Indians by which it is surrounded. This nation is the only independant one and the only one of any strength or importance in North America. Her progress in national strength, and all the branches of civilization more particularly since her revolution has been rapid and unprecedented and it has been but a few ages since the greater part of her territory was inhabited by nothing but howling beasts of prey. She has rose far above any neighbouring colony, while the liberty of her government, the mildness of her laws, the cheapness of land and other advantages, have occasioned a great number of Europeans to resort to it, and make it their adopted country. With the neighbouring Indians she has had some wars, but the latter were soon taught to dread the effects of superior numbers, arms, and descipline. Since the conclusion of peace the United States have strove by friendly conduct to inspire them with confidence ; have sent emissaries among them to instruct them in the arts of civilization, which they are beginning to adopt and which are daily increasing among them.

Seperated as this country is from Europe, perhaps no individual power of that quarter can transport an army sufficient to conquer it, and it would be a measure attended with such vast expence and hazzard as will perhaps never be risked, and if attempted would probably be unsuccessful. The advantages of the United States in such a contest could only be equalled by the disadvantages of her enemy. The army of the former would be constantly increasing; that of the latter would more probably be constantly diminishing. The supplies of the former are near and easily obtained, those of the latter are at a distance, and obtained with great difficulty. The necessary assistance is obtained by the former at the most critical period; that of the latter would frequently come when it is too late.

The next great blessing of this country is its republican government and humane laws. The governments may be divided into the general and states government. The general or Federal government is divided into legislative and executive departments. The legislative department is composed of a senate and house of representatives which hold their

deliberations separate. Each state contributes two senators, and they are chosen by the respective governments of the state from which they are sent. The term of their office is six years. For the house of representatives one member is chosen by each of the districts of each of the states, and is elected by the people. These districts are in number proportioned to the population of the states, and are of course very unequal. The term of their office is three years. These two bodies which compose the legislature have the power of deliberating on all matters of a general or national nature, such as declaring war or concluding peace, raising or disbanding armies, and deliberating on all points of relation with other nations. Such is the general complexion of its powers, but to descend into the tedious detail which the subject would admit of, is a task which could not be accomplished in the compass of a letter, nor am I disposed to engage in it. I will only remark that congress itself is often at a loss on points relative to the extent of its powers, which produce long debates. The

general government of the United States is supported by duties on imported articles.

The executive department consists of a president and vice president. The former is by far the most important character, and the performance of the latter is little more than to preside over the deliberations of the senate. The president has the execution of many of the laws, but not those which come under the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States. The functions of the executive department require that it should be in constant session. It corresponds with foreign ministers residing in the country, and gives instructions to ministers of the republick residing at foreign courts. It receives the dispatches of foreign ministers, and when it is thought necessary lays them before congress. It has the power of convening congress on extraordinary occasions. It has the power of granting pardons or remitting fines in decisions of the federal courts.

The governments of the different states are instituted on a model very similiar to the general government, though the object of their power is different. The legislative body is

is composed of a senate and house of representatives; the former chosen from the senatorial districts, and the latter by each county.—These governments have the power of making laws of a common, but not of a national cast, and which govern the state courts but not the federal courts. Of course the laws made by these governments only opperate in the respective states, in which they are established.

The executive authority is lodged in the hands of the governor, who, in some of the states is chosen by the legislature, and in others by the people, and generally has a council of a few members to assist him. This department has the execution of certain laws, and the power of granting pardons; and special power is sometimes vested in it by the legislature, to be exercised when the latter is not in session.

Publick men thus chosen by the people, elected for short periods, and always subject to their check and controul, are naturally and habitually led to make the interest of the people the polar star of their conduct.

The next great advantage of this country is its wide extent of fertile soil. No part of it is so thickly inhabited as to produce poverty, and there remains large tracts which are not inhabited at all. Whilst in China, every foot of land is cultivated with care, here are vast tracts which are inhabited by nothing but savage beasts. While there population is so great, that the helpless infant is often exposed to death, this country is an assylum to the oppressed of every other nation, and the emigration of foreigners considered an advantage.—This extensive territory, must necessarily turn the attention of the people to agriculture, as their chief pursuit, and is a source of immense wealth. It is for this reason that every class of citizens can easily find employment, and that their labor commands a good price. It is for this reason that there are so few beggars in the country, and that there is more equality in the possession of property than in most other nations. The number of native Americans who are reduced to the necessity of begging, is extremely few. Perhaps they never can resort to it without forfeiting superior advantages, and in cases of lameness,

weakness, or habitual disease, the law humanely provides a support. It is not uncommon, however, to meet with foreigners who have never been naturalized, that pursue the practice of begging. These are such probably who had been accustomed to beg in the country they left, and now from habit resume the practice, and are excluded from the benefit of the poor, from the circumstance of not being citizens. Thus these unhappy beings, too lazy to work, and unable or ashamed to become citizens, only to eat the bread of industry in a land to which they contribute nothing, pursue the degrading practice to the end of their lives.

I before remarked that this country is in general very thinly inhabited. There are a few states however where the soil is well cultivated and agriculture advanced to a considerable state of improvement. This is more generally true of the northern states and the land adjacent the Atlantick. The more western states exhibit in many parts a miserable appearance. The great fault of farming in this country has been a rage for cultivating too much land to the total neglect of manuring

and improving. While their farmers are employed in cultivating one part of a large field the other part is often overrun with grass, and while in the former the growing article exhibits the freshness of cultivation, in the latter it is languishing for want of the plough and the hoe. To such a degree has this unfortunate practice been carried, that on numerous large farms the timber has been cut down and wasted until there is none left for necessary use, while the cleared land for want of cultivation exhibits nothing but poverty. No wonder when we look on such farms that we see the domestic animals broken down and wore out with excess of labour and want of proper treatment. How often have I seen a poor half naked negro boy following a horse over stony solitary hills that could hardly drag one leg after another? How often have I seen these degraded negroes labouring in a dusty and barren soil which perhaps they had a hundred times passed over in the same manner without its ever having received the reviving influence of manure? Thus the master is the worst of tyrants and reduces every thing around him to poverty and distress without deriving any advantage himself.

Another great defect of the farming of these people is the shallowness of their ploughing. Deep ploughing is necessary in breaking up land, and is no less so in cultivation. But it is common enough here to see the plough tottering over stones skimming over the grass, entangled with briars or choaked with weeds, without doing any good to the article. Regular and deep ploughing is little attended to, and its value little known. But the people are at last beginning to open their eyes to the wretched practices of past cultivation, and a better system begins to dawn. The manner of English cultivation, the example of several eminent farmers in their own country, and some books written on the subject have produced a favorable effect. The people now begin to attend to their domestic animals as well as to their desert fields. They now begin to know the importance of manuring, and pay more attention to the proper cultivation of a moderate portion of land, than cultivating a great deal to no purpose. They are in some degree freed from old customs, and it is not difficult to foresee that they will gradually, if

not rapidly improve. The greatest difficulty to improvement in every pursuit, is to get rid of the shackles of custom and prejudice.

It is much to be wished that those who are destined to settle the immense territories, which are still desert, would take heed from the example of their fathers and pursue a different course; that they would not from a rage for cultivation, waste their timber and ruin their farms; that they would not from an appearance of present advantage sacrifice their future prosperity, or to benefit themselves, entail a mutilated territory on their posterity.

Another feature of this country, is the wretched state of its roads in many parts. In China, as well as in some countries of Europe, the roads are equal to the pavements of the towns, whilst here they are almost impassible. It is not uncommon for carriages to be upset from their irregularity, and at other times so deeply entangled in mire, as hardly to be extricated by the horses. Those who are on horseback must have the patience of a philosopher, to endure the tedious difficulty with which his wearied horse moves on thro'

the mire. In other places he trembles in passing over little pole bridges, often full of dangerous holes, and should his horse happen to step into one of them, might run the risk of breaking an ancle or a leg. As to foot passengers, it is rarely that they are enabled to walk in the road, but are obliged to pick their way thro' the woods as well as they can. This description may appear exaggerated, but it is strictly true, though it is more particularly applicable to the roads of the western part of the union. Thou wilt, perhaps, be still more surprised, when I inform thee that the condition of the streets in some of their towns is as bad as their roads. In Virginia, the principal towns are of this description, as well as some in several other parts of the union. In the winter you can hardly get along for the mud, and in the summer your eyes are almost put out with the dust. When the streets are in this miry condition, the people are obliged to wade patiently thro' the mud, or jump from one dry spot to another; but it is seldom that they can extricate themselves without besmearing their boots or shoes, or besplash-

ing their clothes. As to the ladies, they must either ride in carriages or remain in their houses, for it is impossible they can encounter the mire, unless it be only to pass by a few doors. Adieu.

LETTER VII.

THERE is a method of deciding private quarrels in this country, according to which the parties meet at a place previously agreed upon, and with loaded pistols fire at each other. The weapons, the distance at which the parties shall fire, and the time and place of meeting are all fixed by the seconds, with the consent of the principals. Of these seconds, each party has one, and also a surgeon in case of being wounded.

The laws throughout the union are, I believe, designed to suppress the practice, but owing to the vigilance of the parties, the negligence of the civil authorities or the indulgence with which the custom is viewed by the publick, they are seldom ever carried into execution. I do not recollect to have heard of an instance of a person implicated in duelling, being subjected to the penalties of the law.

The proceeding sometimes adopted by the parties is to go into an adjoining state, which of course must have jurisdiction of the offence, and having executed their purpose, they return to their native state where they are beyond the reach of the civil authority. Sometimes the act takes place in the native state of the parties, and if either is killed, the survivor as well as the second fly to an adjoining state, where they remain until the matter is hushed or forgotten and then return.

Upon the first view of this custom, it appears to be an absurd one; because the injured person is under as great a risk of losing his life as the other. But should the reverse take place, there is certainly neither honour nor pleasure to be derived from the consideration of being a murderer. In either case it is plunging into a greater evil to avoid a less, and sacrificing the honourable dictates of conscience to an absurd opinion of society.

It is remarkable that many of these professed duellists, from a callousness of heart and selfish pride seem to exult in their feats in this way; and take to themselves as much honour for destroying the life of a fellow creature, as

if they had been the means of saving one.—Some instances of a contrary nature, however, have fallen under my notice, and I have heard of persons who were hurried into a duel from the heat of passion or the pride of the moment, who had sufficient sensibility to regret it all their lives afterwards.

In these transactions the seconds are often as much to blame as the principals. They often act the part of enemies in the disguise of friends. Their temper is not liable to be irritated, nor their judgment perverted by the peculiar circumstances of the affair, as is the case with the principals; and they generally have it in their power to produce an accommodation, but they seem to be more desirous to irritate than to reconcile. Many a cowardly second is ready enough to encourage a duel between others, which he would shrink from himself; to inspire courage in another when he has none himself; and talk of wounded honor, when in his very conduct at the time, he shews he has no rational regard for it.

One party imagines he has received an insult, and gives a challenge; the other is afraid of being called a coward and accepts of it.

Very often, however, when they get on the brink of the precipice, they shrink back, regret their folly, and are fully disposed to be reconciled. They are induced to terminate a matter through fear, which was began through pride, and to make those explanations very awkwardly at last, which they might have done honorably at first. It is not, however, my intention to moralise on this subject but to describe. I will, therefore, relate a few instances of duelling, which have fallen under my notice, from which you will discover the manner in which it generally arises, and the method of proceeding. Johnson and Clopton meet together at a tavern....they are glad to see one another; and in the joy of the moment call for a bowl, over which to dilute their friendship....they repeat the anecdotes of their past lives, and laugh at their joint adventures.... their conversation soon partakes of every shape and colour, argumentation, story-telling, maxims, jests, criticism, freedom, acrimony, and at last ends in quarrelling. The people about the house flock in the room and prevent them from proceeding to violence....but Johnson tells Clopton that he will hear from him again;

to which Clopton replies that he will be ready to meet him in any manner, or in any place he may think proper. Johnson returns to his lodging and sends for a friend, to whom he imparts the whole affair. They both agree that his honor is deeply wounded; and that the importance of the case requires that they should make the arrangement for repairing to the field as early as possible. The scene of combat, after solemn consultation, is fixed upon in an adjoining state. The parties order horses, servants, and portmanteaus for the expedition, and lay in stock to eat and drink sufficient to last them a year....they exchange a fire, but without doing any material damage, except that Johnson had a small piece of his thumb shot off and Clopton had the thigh of his breeches perforated. Here the seconds interfere, and the heroes being men of great moderation, as well as great courage, are, after some hesitation, persuaded to desist. They now return to their native state in great pomp, each having proved himself to be a man of courage.

Hopkins and Moore were men of very opposite characters. Hopkins had many exte-

rior accomplishments....Moore recommended himself altogether by the unaffected goodness of his nature, and the fair simplicity of his manners. Hopkins attracted the attention of strangers....Moore obtained the love of his friends and those who best knew him. Hopkins paid great deference to established customs and the opinions of the world....Moore often employed his good sense to expose the former, and consulting the dictates of his own conscience, paid very little attention to the latter. These characters sometimes met together at the same house. Hopkins had taken up an idea that Moore disliked him; and under this impression his jaundiced imagination was ready to misconstrue every expression that fell from the latter. In a conversation in which Moore expressed himself with his usual freedom, but without any personal allusion, (of which indeed his nature was incapable) Hopkins's heated imagination collected a thousand expressions which he conceived were aimed directly at himself, and his colour changed repeatedly in the course of the remarks which Moore made. Hopkins now returned to his lodgings....locking himself up

in his room, he continued to walk backward and forward, repeating again and again the expressions he had heard....he stamps his feet, throws up his arms; curses the assassin of his character, and is determined to have revenge....he attempts to go to rest; but his irritated mind and turbulent dreams will not suffer him to sleep....he anxiously wishes for the light of day, and early next morning sends to Moore the following note. "In consequence of your indecent allusions to my character last evening, I have to request that you will disavow every word you uttered, or meet me on the ground of a gentleman."—Moore is astonished at receiving such a note; and still more at a loss to know the occasion of it....he returns, however, the following laconick answer. "The particulars of my remarks last evening are fresh in my recollection, and conscious of having offered you no offence, I can give no explanation." The bearer returns with this to Hopkins, who now writes the following which is handed to Moore. "As you have refused to give me the explanation I demanded, you must be prepared to comply with the only alternative which the nature of

the case admits of. My friend, who does me the honour of being the bearer of this, will arrange with your friend the terms of meeting." This note Moore hands back to the bearer without giving any reason for his non-acceptance of it. Upon this Hopkins affixes, in some public place, the following libel. "I hereby pronounce Hazelop Moore to be a liar, a scoundrel, a poltroon, and a coward.

"JOHN HOPKINS."

To this pompous piece of idle nonsense, every one crouds to look with gaping curiosity. The hero who is the author of it struts the street with more consequence than ever, and enjoys, if not in reality, at least in imagination, the admiration of the town.

Rogers and Clifton were both paying their addresses to the same lady, and each conceived he had the priority of claim. The young lady seemed to prefer the pretensions of Clifton, but this did not satisfy Rogers....he looked upon his opponent as an intruder, who had alienated the regard of the young lady from him, without intending to marry her himself; but even if such were his views, it wounded him so much the more, that she whom he

fondly believed, was to crown his happiness, should be torn from him and possessed by another. At last a challenge passed, and the necessary arrangements are preparing by the parties for carrying their views into execution, but as the time approached each began to regret his rashness. " Why, says one, should I sacrifice my life for a woman who has no regard for me; whom, should I escape the danger of a duel, I shall never possess, and who, should I die, will not shed one tear for my memory? Are there not many women in the world, as amiable and beautiful as she, and who would be more disposed to favor my addresses?" The other reflects pretty much in the same strain. " Since I enjoy the smiles of her whom I love, why should I run the risk of blasting all the happiness which a peaceful union with her would bestow? Why should I run the risk of losing my life or of plunging her into misery, merely to encounter the frowns of a jealous adversary? Should I survive, I might return with a broken leg, arm or head, in which case I can never be the object of her love." These reflections unnerve the resolution of the parties, and almost throw

them into a hypochondriack state; but the arrangement has now taken place, and they are bound to carry it into execution....they do not, however, take much pains to conceal the affair from the publick, or to prevent it from coming to the ears of the magistrates, whose duty it is to suppress such practices. The seconds are sometimes seen passing backwards and forwards, sometimes conversing together, and sometimes walking in solemn consultation with the principals. The parties are seen moulding bullets, rubbing up their pistols, walking out to exercise at the mark, &c. &c. They do not hesitate to disclose the matter *in confidence* to their friends, and take of them a pathetick farewell, in case they should never see them again. They even drop ambiguous hints of it in publick, and leave people to draw their own conclusions. In the mean time the magistrates seeing what is on foot, have the parties arrested, and compel them to give security for their good behaviour, which no doubt they very readily do, and are glad even on these terms to get rid of the affair.

Earl and Stanhope were two respectable men of family. They resided in the same

county, were of opposite politicks, and each offered to represent their county in the legislature of the state. This, it seems was the subject of their misunderstanding, and one reported, or was stated to have reported, that the other made use of unfair means to procure his election. The honorable seconds who were concerned in this case, strove much to produce a reconciliation; but new occurrences served to inflame the minds of the parties, and bring on the unhappy catastrophe. Stanhope had once made a kind of explanation, but something which he afterwards inadvertantly uttered, which was told with exaggeration, served to inflame the matter beyond the possibility of reconciliation. The parties who had been so long intimate friends, who once esteemed each other's virtues, and forgave each other's foibles, now meet on the ground, with no other sentiment but that of murdering each other. They fired almost at the same instant. One was shot through the heart, instantly fell and expired on the spot. The other was dangerously wounded and carried in a car from the field. The effusion of blood was so great, that his friends almost

despaired of reaching home with him alive.—This, however, they effected, and his distracted family, who with sad presentiments had been enquiring for him in vain, now met him at the door, groaning in pain, disfigured with blood, and on the verge of existence. The skill of his physicians and the tenderness of his family are in vain, and in a few hours he expires.

LETTER VIII.

I HAVE for some time past been acquainted with a man here who has rendered me several services; and our acquaintance has now ripened into mutual friendship and esteem. I have often felt the want of a friend in the countries, through which I have successively travelled, and national puculiarities have always presented themselves as not the least obstacle to the attainment of my wishes. My present companion has neither the austerity of an Englishman, nor the egotism of a Frenchman; he is neither too melancholy, nor too volatile; but the light and shade of his character are very happily blended. But though his character is made up of this well proportioned degree of different qualities, though he cannot be said to be under the habitual influence of any one humour in particular; he in turn partakes of them all; and this is perhaps one

of his peculiarities. He possesses in a singular degree that contagious sympathy which belongs to the whole human species, in their commerce with one another, and which is so strongly and immediately communicated from one to another, by the looks, the tone of voice, and even the position of the body and action of the limbs. At the recital of a melancholy story, his looks are immediately cast to the earth, while not unfrequently the tears flow down his cheeks, or if he looks up it is only to give vent to the sigh which labored in his bosom; but upon hearing a lively anecdote, or a witty pun, his countenance becomes as bright as the star immerging from a cloud, and not only speaks the pleasure he feels himself, but diffuses the same pleasure among all around him. The sight of a funeral procession depresses his heart with corresponding feelings; but the celebration of a public day, or the sound of a drum, elevates his spirits in an equal degree. When a person enters the room in haste, his looks are immediately cast up full of enquiry and concern, for he expects to hear of some disaster that has happened in the street. My companion is an easy prey to

beggars: their decrepit appearance, their ragged dress, and their mournful voice, are what his sympathy cannot withstand; and the hand of relief is extended e're the tale of sorrow is heard. Notwithstanding these delusions, he prides himself on his skill in physiognomy, which is a science that his peculiarities naturally lead him to study. He assures me that he has read Lavater through no less than five times, and that besides the amusement he has derived from it, it has been of great service to him in detecting impostors, distinguishing merit and avoiding the imposition of mankind. What I have seen indeed of the worthy man convinces me that he is rather under the influence of his own sympathy, than of any general rules of Lavater. An open dignified look in a man, or the tranquil smiling countenance of a woman, are to him irresistable charms. When on our walks we meet with a person of this description, particularly a female, he jogs me with his arm and bids me behold the interesting creature. Often he will involuntarily stop in the street, cast a lingering look after the object, and when she turns a corner, or is confounded in a croud,

his dejected countenance seems to say, "Alas! shall I never have the pleasure of seeing you again?" Upon other occasions, however, my friend takes no little pride in displaying to me his fancied knowledge of his favorite science; points out certain characters whom if I should ever come in contact with to avoid; that the osteology of their face is evidently against them; that though the lines of feature, are in several respects good, there are others which destroy the harmony of the whole: and though many persons might be deceived in their appearance, yet an adept in physiognomy would always detect the delusion.

From the natural flexibility of the character of my friend, he has a great facility in adopting his manner to the humor of the persons with whom he successively associates. In company with politicians, he talks of the administration of government and the political aspect of the times; relates the news which has lately arrived, and comments on its probable truth or falsehood; draws the character of public men with whom he has been acquainted, and relates anecdotes both of their publick and private life. In company with the Divine,

he talks of plans lately formed for the establishment of new churches, of the progress which christianity is making among the people of different and distant parts of the earth, and among their neighbouring Indians; and is happy to hear any difficult passage of the bible explained, or any moral maxim confirmed or illustrated by a text of scripture. In company with the women, his conversation is marked with the same flexibility. If he addresses the matron he talks of the best method of pickling and preserving: speaks of new publications on the art of cookery, and concludes with admiring the delicate hue of the ladies cups and saucers. If he addresses the young women, he talks with equal facility of the different kinds of female dress—of those fashions which are declining, and those which are just introduced; describes the different parties, that he has already been at, and relates the adventures he met with, and remarks that he is happy to find that the good sense of the ladies has discarded the dissembling practice of painting and wearing wigs. This trait of my companion does not proceed from duplicity, but form benevolence,

and is rendered easy from much commerce with the world. With all his flexibility of behaviour, no person is governed by a more rigid principle of honour, and though he endeavours to conform to the character of all, he can never flatter or even pardon the vices of any.

There is one particular in which my companion seems to depart from his general flexibility, and this is a strong partiality for all the peculiarities of his native country. There is nothing which can reflect honour on his own country, which he will not maintain to be superior to that of every other in the world.—In his comments on all that we see, he takes great pains to impress the same idea on my mind, and at an early period of our acquaintance, assured me that it was absolutely necessary, to throw aside my Chinese oddities as he calls them, and conform to the dress, manners and customs of his own country. He has persuaded me, or rather forced me to part with my fine tail of hair, to have it trimmed after the manner of his country, and assures me that a little powder on certain occasions would not be amiss. In short he gives direc-

tions to my barber, without in the least consulting me, and the fellow seems to think himself entirely under his controul. He tells me that it is absolutely necessary that I should lay aside as much as possible my grotesque appearance, that I should otherwise be the object of publick gaping, and perhaps publick ridicule, that the boys would croud around me; the women would squint at me; and that my ears would constantly be assailed with the sound of "the Chinese! the Chinese!" He assured me that he did not despair of making me pass in time for a tolerable American, and from his manner seemed to think that I should take it as a very great compliment. Vain and foolish nation! Why not allow us to possess some degree of national pride as well as yourselves! Why not enjoy your own customs and suffer us to follow ours?

My companion is not satisfied with moulding my exterior into that of an American: his national enthusiasm has even led him to propose to me to become an American citizen, and also to throw aside my partiality for the philosophy of Confusius, and embrace the

Christian religion. Indeed such was the frankness and warmth of his manner on this subject, that I could not but treat his proposition with the respect, which his good intention demanded. On the subject of becoming a citizen, he assured me that there was no nation more exempt from the political disasters of the times than his own; no nation where science was of more easy access; and no nation that afforded a more secure assylum to foreigners, or where they met with a more welcome reception. In reply I suggested that, "besides the natural partiality which every person feels for the country which gives us existence---I had friends and even relations in China, who anxiously expected my return, and who would be eager to hear from my own lips, an account of my many coloured adventures; that I only visited the United States as I had done many other countries, with the curiosity of a traveller, and neither expected nor wished to make it my adopted country; that the country in which I derived my birth, I wished also to lay my bones; and that I should rejoice to see once more before I died, the companions of the days of my youth." The

natural warmth of the character of my friend here, flushed into his face. He averred that it was far from his wish to attempt to weaken my resolution, and that I was bound to comply with it by all the ties and sympathies of human nature. "But believe the sincerity of my friendship," said he, "when I entreat you to embrace our holy religion, established by the most undoubted miracles, and endeared to us by the sufferings and blood of Christ himself. What, though you be an inhabitant of a distant part of the earth! No particular portion of the world is either embraced or excluded in the Christian scheme of salvation, and the happiness of Heaven is hung out to the whole human race. "Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth," is the promise of the creator himself.

Remember my friend that we have not long to stay in this world, and when you bid me a last adieu, to depart for your native country, how should I rejoice in the reflection, that we are to meet again in the mansions of the blest. In reply, I observed that I had no reason to be surprised that the Christian religion, should be dear to his heart, since it was

the religion of his country, and derived from education and early impressions; I had no reason to be offended at his desire, to make the same impression on me, since it proceeded not only from his own faith, but also from his solicitude for my welfare, of which I had already had many proofs, and of which I should always retain a grateful impression. But I stated the great difficulty of suddenly believing a religion of which I scarcely ever heard the name until I left my native country. I suggested to him whether his own belief proceeded from any other cause or agency than education; whether if he had been born in Turkey or Arabia, he would not have been a follower of Mahomet; whether if he had been born of Jewish parents, he would not have been a follower of Moses; and whether if he had been born in China, he might not, like myself, have been a disciple of the wise and virtuous Confucius. "We see, said I, that all mankind neither are, nor can be of the same religion; but I conceive it of little consequence what religion we may possess; or in other words, on what part of the great globe we happen to be born, so as we follow that light

of nature which God has given us, and which is not confined to this country, or to that, but is inherent in the whole human race."

"But do we not," replied my companion, "find this light of nature insufficient for the purpose you mention: else why are books written, why are penal laws enacted? But God seeing the feebleness of these aids, not only in giving man a knowledge of his attributes and perfections, but also in the government of his moral conduct in this life, has graciously revealed himself in our holy religion. This is of more importance in reclaiming the deluded world, and teaching the total of what is necessary to be known, than all the aids which the wisdom of man has been able to devise, and is at the same time a sourse of perpetual consolation. It supports us in adversity, and it checks the presumption of prosperity. It inspires us with joy, gratitude, and veneration by the display of that brilliant prospect after death, which, to the unfortunate being that has no religion, is enveloped in darkness, anxiety, uncertainty, and terror. You say all mankind neither do, nor can, believe in this divine religion. I admit it. Those who are

beyond the reach of its knowledge, do not, perhaps, come under its penalties, and where there is no command heard there can be no transgression. These unfortunate nations, we must leave to the wisdom and goodness of God and it is not for us to say, in what manner he will dispose of them. But surely those who have an opportunity of seeing and knowing the excellence of our holy religion are deficient in their duty to themselves, if not in their duty to God, if they do not avail themselves of the inestimable blessing. At least it is the duty of all to enquire into a matter of such magnitude, and compared to which all other concerns vanish into nought.

" Let me then advise you my friend, to investigate the subject, and you will be richly rewarded. How many hardships have you endured, how many difficulties have you encountered in wandering through so many countries in pursuit of knowledge, which must fade with this life? and will you refuse to devote a small portion of your time to that which may secure your eternal happiness hereafter; a happiness which will still be only commencing when the earth shall fall into atoms or be

struck from the universe, and which will be assuming new brightness when the sun himself shall fade into nought."

Alas! cried I, you did not attend to the substance of my first remark, your own zeal prevents you from weighing my argument, or even making allowance for the difficulties under which, as a foreigner, I must view the subject. The dispute turns upon this point, is the Christian religion the only true religion, or is it not? If it is the only true religion; if it is the only religion from God, why is it not the only prevailing religion on earth? Why is it not as universal as the light of the sun, or the atmosphere which envelopes the earth? Why is the Mahometan religion more general? Had God ever seen proper to send a revelation on earth, it would be deeply and equally important to the whole human family, of which he is the common father, and he would not have given it to one part and withheld it from another. Like the people of every other country, it is natural, indeed, that you should believe your religion to be the only true one because you derived it from your parents.—The impression in such cases is received

when the mind is susceptible and the understanding feeble, but when we arrive at years of discretion it is too strong to be resisted. We are, indeed, so confident of its truth that we do not advert to the necessity of inquiry; and so far from exercising independent reflection we timidly shrink from the doubts which may casually arise. Like children in the dark, we are afraid of our own ideas.—From the same infatuation it happens that when we come in contact with others, so far from being willing to receive information, we are partial, overbearing, and in many cases sanguinary and cruel. Is it not from this principle, that nations have been hurried into the horrors of war, each in support of its own religion? Is it not from this principle that the different sects of the same religion, and the very religion which you profess, as they happened to gain the ascendancy to power, consigned each other to the burning flame, because the unfortunate victims could not think exactly as their persecutors.

Do not think, however, that from these remarks I have any desire to weaken your faith, or to cast any stigma on your religion. If,

as you say, it is a source of consolation to you; if it enlarges your knowledge of the divine attributes of God, if it tends to promote the general welfare of society....I pronounce it worthy the patronage of your country. But the same indulgence which I grant to you, I expect you will grant to me. I have already received my ideas of God and futurity, which are sanctioned by my reason and dear to my heart, and therefore I am as little disposed to renounce them as you are to renounce yours.

I know the faith of my companion to be inflexible, but such is the sympathy of his nature, that he now embraced me cordially and declared, that since our souls were so congenial in every other respect, it was impossible that we should ever differ on an abstract opinion of religion.

LETTER IX.

SCIENCE, in this country, has made rapid advances since the revolution. Several things have conspired in producing this effect. In the first place, that pride and elevation which the people felt, when they had thrown off the shackles of subjection, and found themselves independent, naturally inspired a corresponding action, and nothing which could promote the national honour, or advantage of the state was neglected. Many of the leading characters of the country, stepped forth in the cause of learning; public bodies co-operated in the same, and parents smiled at the brilliant prospects of education held out to their children. The country now, had no longer the appearance of a discontented colony, laboring under existing evils and gloomy prospects, but every thing was calculated to inspire pride, joy and cheerfulness. Whether they turned their eye to

their own country, or to the countries of Europe; whether to the present, past or future, they had equal reason to appreciate their situation, and return thanks to providence. The troubles of war being over, their energies were now excited in promoting the arts of peace, and to use the expression of their sacred volume, "the swords were beat into plough shares, and the spears into pruning hooks." The glorious commander in chief, destined by Heaven for the purposes he atchieved, who, in the arduous cause was surrounded with so many difficulties, but never despaired, who received so many honours from the hands of his country, but never was intoxicated, cheerfully gave up the pomp of command for the fond endearments of domestick life, and the useful and innocent pursuits of agriculture. He saw with pleasure the brilliant prospect which now opened to view.

Savage nations have an obstinate attachment to their old customs, and an invincible repugnance to civilization; they cannot appreciate the value of that, the blessings of which they have never tasted, and hence they

generally must be conquered before they can be civilized. But the Americans at this period enjoyed a sufficient share of civilization to make them struggle for more. Here a spot is chosen for the metropolis of the union, ornamented with public buildings, equally spacious and magnificent. There a body of republican sages held their luminous discussions, for the formation of a general constitution, which would harmonize the interests of the different parts of the state into one perfect system: which would hold out the terrors of punishment to the ambitious and corrupt, and watch over the happiness of successive generations. Publick buildings every where arose from the earth; those dedicated to the cause of science, those to the cause of religion, and those to the cause of humanity.

And here I cannot but suspend my remarks for a moment, while I express the deep veneration which I feel for the character of that chief who performed so distinguished a part in the revolutionary war, as well as the political operations which afterwards took place: I mean George Washington, whose vigilance siezed every favorable opportunity for attack,

while his prudence avoided every disadvantageous rencountre: who preserved his army when he could not conquer, and kept them together, amidst all their discontent and all their sufferings. Had the Americans been less cautious, or the British more daring, the cause of America must inevitably have fallen. How numerous were the virtues of this extraordinary man, and how few his failings! What dignity, and yet what modesty! What fervent love of country, and what incorruptible integrity. How far was he elevated above the influence of prosperity or adversity! How fond of virtuous retirement, and how insensible to the empty pomp of office: yet for the sake of his country he readily gives up the pleasure of the one, to encounter the cares and difficulties of the other. He could not be said to live for himself, for his whole life was devoted to publick cares, while the natural propensity of his heart sighed for retirement; yet his reward in the next world is infinitely beyond what this could have bestowed. It was not until his country could hear the plaintive plea of declining years, that they would suffer him to remain in retirement. It is true, that fickle-

ness, natural to the people, sometimes impaired, or suspended the confidence he always merited; yet in his farewell address, he presents the gratitude of his heart for the uniform support he had always met with. The most prominent traits of his publick character was a rectitude of understanding, which no art of sophistry could either baffle or mislead, and an inflexible principle of honour which neither the extravagance of publick favour, nor of publick clamours could divert from its purpose.

But to return to the present state of learning in this country, another support which it has received since the revolution, and which has been anticipated from what I have stated, is the influx of learned foreigners. It is true, the characters who emigrated to this country were of various descriptions, and came from various motives. Some came over because they were surrounded with poverty at home, and they were told this was a country where every thing was to be enjoyed and nothing to be suffered. Some came over because they were oppressed at home, and they were told this was "an assylum for the oppressed of

every nation." Some came over because they wanted to see a country where such an astonishing revolution had taken place, and where every body had a right to think and speak as they pleased. A few real republicans came over, because they preferred living under a government which was congenial to their principles. Many came over because their trade or profession was overstocked in their own country, while they were told that here employment was ample, and prices high. Of these, many whose talents in their own country, were below mediocrity, or perhaps held in contempt, came over, and by assuming the importance of an European, publishing pompous advertisements, and telling marvellous tales, imagined they could easily impose on the credulity of the nation, and elevate themselves to honour and profit. Some perhaps came over who thought they were doing well in their own country, but imagined they could do better here. But amidst this diversity of characters, the United States no doubt obtained many learned and worthy men. Many of the teachers both in the city and the village, both in publick colleges and country

schools are foreigners. Such has been the mediocrity of learning in this country, that the higher branches of it have been almost exclusively confined to foreigners, though this distinction is not so perceptible now as formerly. The people, before the revolution had much of that torpid ignorance which belongs to the savage state, and were more devoted to the pursuits of gain than to the pursuits of literature. Parents, such as had a wish to have their children well educated, very frequently after they had acquired the rudiments, sent them to Europe, not only to obtain their professional degrees in law and physick, but also to acquire the common attainments of an accomplished education. The latter practice is now totally abolished, and the former, though sometimes adopted, is, perhaps, never necessary.

Though the arts and sciences have made rapid advances since the revolution, it does not appear to have produced a corresponding effect, and great men appear to be even more rare now than formerly. The revolutionary war produced a Washington, and self energy and self application produced a Franklin and a

Rittenhouse; but what has the advance of science done for the honour of the present day, or where are the luminaries of the age to be found? I have been much at a loss to give a solution of this matter. Is it owing to a deficiency of genius in the present age? I am persuaded this idea is inconsistent with the established laws of nature. Is it because the ambition of the people is altogether directed to publick offices, while the prospect of literary fame is neither so sure nor so inviting? This is a point which demands at least some attention, if not some illustration.

The peculiar government of this country is perhaps more calculated to excite the ambition of the people generally for publick places than any other in the world. Most of these are at the disposal of the people; the elections are held at stated periods and cannot fail to excite the interest and attract the attention of all. The zeal of the people, and the ambition of the candidates are equally great. The former conceive the issue is connected with their dearest rights and interests; to the latter there is something irresistably captivating in the triumph of election and the pomp of office.

When, on the other hand, I look to the reward of literary pursuits in this country, I find it to be such as to suppress rather than to encourage. It is truly amusing to listen to the pompous boast of these people, respecting their "superior illumination," when, in the most slavish manner, they look up to England for every production, both of amusement and instruction, and seem to think it impossible that an American can write a book. They are freed from the political dominion of Britain, but in respect of literature they are still only her satellite and thence receive all their brightness. If an European production is issued from the press, that is sufficient to recommend it; if an American, that is sufficient to damn it. The booksellers will not purchase it....the people will not read it. No matter what may be the real genius of the unknown author....no matter what may have been the glowing rapture which the flight of his ideas inspired, or the brilliant prospect of success which then arose to his deluded fancy. When he looks around for publication, he meets with nothing but gloomy looks and evasive insinuations. The son of genius and

misfortune finds that he has not only been spending his time in vain, but actually involving himself in real difficulties. Gladly would he console himself in his known superiority and look down with contempt on the contracted and illiberal world; but it will not do....he feels a sorrow at heart which is unknown to the labourer of the mine and the pit. Throwing aside all prospect of interest, even the craving expectations of his heart are not satisfied, and he hears not one approving expression....perhaps not an abstract opinion of the merit of a book, which yet the divine rapture with which it was written, assures him with more certainty than could all the acclamations of the world, that it will descend to unborn generations and be read with pleasure when himself and his judges shall be no more.

When such is the disposition of this people towards their own authors; oh thou enlightened patron of all that bears the marks of genius, thou instructor, friend and guardian of my youth....what right have they to suppose their country will ever be the nursery of great men? What right have they to suppose that the man of genius, any more than the fool,

will devote a large portion of his time to the complicated and almost endless pursuits of learning without the feeblest hope of advantage; that he will consume the midnight oil and bear the paleness of study, when the prospect of publication can be compared to nothing but the meteor which holds for a while its sparkling course, attracts the attention of a few and is soon extinguished in darkness and forgotten forever.

LETTER X.

I STATED in my last letter, O thou light of wisdom! that science had made rapid advances in this country since the revolution. This is a position, however, that admits of many exceptions, and in a country so extensive, a skilful observer may trace almost every progressive shade from a state of barbarity to the highest state of civilization. The geography of the country does not exhibit a greater variety than does the state of its manners.—When I look at its map, I here behold populous and elegant cities; there I behold wild and trackless forests, inhabited by nothing but howling beasts of prey; here are smiling vallies; there are barren mountains: in some places agriculture is advanced to the highest improvement, and every spot yields a rich crop ....in others the fields are barren, the domestick animals poor and spiritless, and the grow-

ing articles yellow, withered, and declining. No less diversified is the state of civilization. Here the people are illuminated with science; there they are immersed in clouds of ignorance; here are to be seen all the elegance, the bombast, and the foppery of the fashionable world; there all the plainness, the ruggedness, and the simplicity of a state removed but a few degrees above barbarity. This is a matter which travellers cannot attend to in its full latitude, and which they do not attend to as much as they ought....they cannot draw the perspective of the manners of a country....they can seldom travel through the different parts of it....and even then it is extremely difficult to ascertain where these shades either begin or end, and to deliniate them without exaggeration. Great allowance should be made for these difficulties; but after all due allowance is made travellers are often presumptuous and erroneous. How absurd is it to expect by residing a short time in the metropolis of a country to be able to give a full account of the manners of the country itself? How often is an accidental occurrence taken for an established custom, and a local custom for a general one?

How often does the traveller suffer his own temper, or the incidents he may have met with, to give an exaggeration to the picture which bears no resemblance to the original. How often does he brand this country as barbarous, and applaud that as civilized, when the different parts of each differ as much from one another as do the countries themselves, and when a skilful observer could trace in each almost every shade from barbarity to civilization.

It is remarkable that the natives of every country are themselves constantly making this blunder. It is a common thing among the people here to allot different customs to each state, without considering whether they be original or adopted, or whether they belong most to that state or to the state adjoining. It is a common thing to say, "I know a northern man or a Yankee, a Pennsylvanian or a Virginian, by his appearance," but nature every where opperates in such variety, and produces characters of such opposite extremes that the expression is absurd. The laws of each state are indeed distinct, and their opperation pre-

scribed within geographical boundaries, but in no other respect is the maxim true.

But to return to the general state of literature. You will not expect that I shall be able to delineate to you, with geographical precision, the state of learning in every part of this extensive continent. The difficulties as already stated, are insurmountable; and if they could be overcome the advantage would not compensate for the trouble. This field I leave for more daring adventurers. I shall follow the example of the geographer who, in drawing the map of a country not fully explored, gives the real delineation of the part which is known and leaves the rest blank, with the word doubtful thereon. By this means I shall copy nature and not disfigure her; and if I shall not deserve the praise of industry, I shall, at least, avoid the censure of presumption.

The unequal state of learning in different parts of the Union may be traced among the members sent from the different districts, and assembled together in congress. You would suppose that each district would at least be capable of sending one man of talents sufficient to represent it; but this is not the

case. The constitutional view of the meeting of this body is indeed to represent the interest of the respective districts, but though there have always been many members in it of respectable talents, there are alw ys many whose aukward conduct and rugged appearance, shew them better calculated to represent the ignorance than defend the interest or support the dignity of their districts. Whether it be that such parts of the country have no men of talents, or whether the people are themselves so ignorant that they cannot distinguish them, I know not. For such people to appreciate the value of men of genius is perhaps as much above their comprehension as to ascertain the orbit of a comet. They look upon them as beings of another order, around whom there is an atmosphere of repulsion which they cannot approach. They can feel no more sympathy for them than they could for the inhabitants of another planet. How then can they be supposed to represent their interests? But the candidate who can drink the honest farmer's grog, and enter into his rustick stile of conversation, who will listen to his story of the boggs he has lately cleared up;

of the remedies which he has lately found out for the diseases of his horses and cattle; of the number of pigs which his sow had at a litter; of the subjection under which he has brought his servants; of the work which he has sometimes had done in a day; of the schemes which he and neighbour Simon have concerted for their mutual benefit: the candidate who can listen to this, and talk in a corresponding strain; this, this is the accomplished fellow, the model of perfection, both worthy and capable of representing him in congress.

In my excursions through some of the frontier parts of the country I was struck with the extreme ignorance of the people. Here no colleges, no publick libraries, no academies are to be found, any more than they are to be met with among the barbarian hordes of Africa, or the wildest woods of Louisianna. The library generally consists of a bible, a testament, and sometimes a dictionary and a few old English publications, generally on religious subjects: whilst to the children belong a reading book, in which they stammer over their lessons, a spelling book, and sometimes a grammar. If at any house I accidentally met

with a larger collection they generally laid in a solitary corner, and from their mouldering and dusty appearance sufficiently proclaimed that the torpid mind of their possessor was directed to other concerns, and that they were seldom touched. The school houses to be met with, are a kind of little log cabins covered with boards and plastered with clay, but hardly sufficient to keep out the overwhelming torrent, or the piercing wind. Sometimes they stand on the sides of the road, sometimes in an old field, and sometimes in the woods, with little paths leading to it. Here the boys make the fire in rotation, while the master gives directions how to put on the logs, and teaches reading, writing, cyphering, and sometimes a smattering in grammar, but as to geography, or the common practical branches of mathematicks, they are as much above his comprehension as it would be to measure the distance of the planet Herskell. Is this satire? ah no! I too well recollect the melancholy feelings with which I viewed those poor little children trudging through the mud, the snow, and the ice, for such a scanty and miser-

able prospect of education, to feel any thing but simpathy in the description.

It is not uncommon in these parts to meet with men who own tracts of land, of which they hardly know the extent, who cannot write their names. Many who in the early part of life learned the common rudiments of education, have so little occasion for them in the dark state of society in which they live, or are so wholly devoted to rugged pursuits or hard labour, that they have either totally forgot them, or retain but a very scanty remnant. Many who should attempt to write a letter, or even a short note, would do it in such a blundering manner, both in hand writing and orthography, that a school boy who should see it, would laugh in proud superiority. Their dress is of the coarsest homespun; and their manners still coarser. Their hospitality (and happy I am to say so, for it reflects honour on the natural character of man) is always conspicuous, and their accommodations, though of the coarsest sort, is ever granted with a hearty welcome. But as to conversation, the principal that a traveller from an improved part of the country can expect to derive, is some

direction about the roads; the course which he is to pursue, and the distance to certain places. When from any expression that fell from me, they understood I had come from near the Metropolis; they enquired with wild eager looks, what was the news; whether Britain was going to do them justice, or whether they should have to shoulder their muskets; whether the embargo on the vessels was to be kept on or taken off. I always endeavoured to statisfy their enquiries as well as I could, adapted to their comprehension. They are by no means unsociable, particularly to strangers, and never declined talking on subjects within their comprehension, or on which they could give me any information; and I confess I often listened with more heart felt pleasure to their honest rustic strain, than I derived from all the bombast and artifice of civilized life. They could give me some account of the desert woods, by which we were surrounded; of the game which they had, and of the number of wild turkeys which they sometimes killed in a day, of the kind of produce which they were accustomed to cultivate, of the bushels of wheat or barrels of corn

which they raised from an acre; of the frost which sometimes destroyed their fruit; of the droughts which sometimes withered their corn and wheat, or the torrents which sometimes overwhelmed it; of the number of cattle which this neighbour lost from a hard spell of weather; or of the unsuccessful attempt of another to bring water to a mill which he hoped to establish. Such in general was the extent of their knowledge. Their sons work in the field; their daughters wash, cook, and do most of the house work. You will think this hard treatment for females; but from their robust appearance they are fully able to bear it. The country generally is not destitute of European gallantry, but you must recollect the parts of it of which I am speaking. Those poor girls would feel as much at a loss in a ball, a drawing school, or the common society of the Metropolis, as an Indian would, placed on a throne in Europe. From my conversation with the inhabitants of the cities, after my return from these wild excursions, I found they were as ignorant of the state of society in these parts, as they could be of the people in the islands of the wide unexplored

Pacific Ocean. In many of the extreme frontier parts, the inhabitants partake very much of the manners of their neighbouring Indians, and live almost as much by hunting as by agriculture. Some have even been so much charmed, with the wild woods and roving life of their neighbours, that they give up the society of their own colour to live with the red men.

If you should be inclined to ask to what particular portion of the country the preceding picture is applicable, I can only answer to no one portion in particular, but to parts scattered throughout the union; that the more you advance from the old settled parts of the country, the more it is applicable; that it is more applicable to the southern or western states, than to the northern or eastern; more applicable to parts of the country remote from cities and commerce, than those adjacent to the Atlantic, the Chesapeake, and the principal navigable rivers: More applicable to the Dutch settlements than to the American; that it is not only applicable to parts of the country taken in a mass, but to parts of several of the principal states, and to Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York, as well as the Indiana

and Mississippi territories; that as the picture was more particularly suggested by what I saw in my excursion through the wild parts of the country, so it is more particularly applicable to these in its full extent, and should not give rise to an injurious reflection on the country generally, and finally that it is impossible to give any precise geographical information, farther than what these general remarks may be calculated to convey.

To return to my excursions. My mind was not more pleased and exercised in contemplating the manners of the people, than my senses were struck with the wild and diversified scenes of nature in which I constantly found myself. Ragged rocks, awful cliffs, towering trees and impetuous torrents, were constantly before my view but ever combined and thrown together in such new and whimsical shapes as to afford unalloyed delight; and sometimes burst upon me in such awful sublimity as to swell my bosom in adoring rapture of the divine creator. Game of all kinds was to be seen in vast abundance. The immense flocks of wild turkeys covered the ground, or broke down the bending limbs of the trees on

which they were crouded. Flocks of wild pigeons came over me in such clouds as almost to obscure the light of heaven, and my horse would sometimes start and tremble at the darkening shadow which they cast on the earth. The foxes sprung across the road before me; the squirrels played upon the limbs of the trees, constantly throwing down the shells of nuts and acorns they consumed; the wolves howled at a distance. The pleasure which I felt, and the degree in which my curiosity was stimulated often led me to ramble from the road. The wild and rugged scenes in which I sometimes found myself in these excursions, inspired feelings which induced me to think that a human foot could never here have pressed the earth, nor a human voice have trembled in the air. In other places the scenes were as pleasing as those were awful, and the beautiful shrubs, the gay, romantick, and variegated flowers, surpassed any thing that I had ever seen in the gardens of Europe.

In some parts of my journey I found myself elevated on the top of a stupendous mountain and looked down and saw the world beneath me. The assent is in some places so gradual

as to be hardly perceived, in others so steep as hardly to be surmounted, and in looking down over the rocks and precipices you can hardly bear the dizziness which comes over you. Here the thick clouds, ready to burst with rain, often passed but a little distance above my head....at another time I could see them gathering in blackness below me, and pouring down in torrents, while above the sun appears in all his majesty, every object is gilded with his rays, and the sky presents one unspotted azure. Here I would sometimes endeavour to trace the diversified objects; the hills, the rocks, the vales, the woods that was spread out in boundless view below, until every shade was involved in the thick mist which seemed to enshroud them. It is impossible for me to express the divine rapture which swelled in my bosom in viewing this grand and diversified scene. I felt as if I could spend unclogged the days of eternity in the contemplation. I scarcely felt as if I was any longer on this earth; as if I belonged to the puny race of men or was under the influence of the groveling ties which bind them to the earth. Ah! what being of sensibility can view those glorious

objects, and shall dare to say there is no God? No, never will I plunge into the clouds of metaphisical absurdity, never will I search for arguments to convince me there is a God, when such irresistable impressive proofs are every where before my eyes. These! these speak alike to my feelings and my reason. Weak, presumptuous man, is it in thy power to overthrow these proofs? Oh no! No more than it is in the power of the mole to undermine the foundation or overthrow the structure of a temple.

In other places I found myself enclosed in long and deep vallies where the awful heights which surrounded me almost obscured the light of day. Here towering trees of every description grow in crouds, and spreading out in their wild and natural magnificence, their limbs are so thickly entwined as almost to defy the ap roach of light, and in the midst of day to enshroud the darkness of night. The awful cliffs looked down upon me and seemed to threaten to crush me to pieces. The craggy rocks rose one above another, and hung over the dreadful precipice. Here immense trees have been torn up by the roots, and falling

spread devastation among others, plough up the ground and are dashed into a thousand pieces. In ascending these vales I almost felt as if I was immerging from the centre of the earth, and my eyes could scarcely bear the dazzleing light of the sun. I enjoyed with new life the pure air and vivid appearance of every thing around me.

Very often at the approach of eve I would involuntarily stop my horse to enjoy the melancholy grandeur of the scene, and the assotiating ideas which it inspired. Here while I distinguished through the darkness, the confused shades of the woods, the towering poplar, and the majestick oak; here while I listened to the barking of the fox, and the howling of the wolves; I could not but reflect on the singularity of my situation. I had visited every populous city in Europe; I had seen all the elegance of civilized life, and now I was far from the haunts of man, and surrounded by nothing but howling beasts of prey. I had always enjoyed the society and conversation of friends and now I was surrounded with nothing but solitude, darkness, and silence. I was a native of China, whose inhabitants

scarcely ever set foot beyond their own territory, and here I was buried in the wild woods of America. How little did my friends in China at this time know my situation? How little could they suppose that my restless curiosity would ever have led me so far. These excursions in many parts were attended with eminent danger. How did I know but I might every moment be the victim of the devouring panther, concealed among winding limbs and shrouded in the gloom of night? How did I know but I might every moment hear the dreadful yells of the scalping Indians, rushing towards me while I should have nothing to do but to yield myself a victim to their ferocity? How did I know but I might every moment see the disguised white robber advancing from the side of the road and presenting a loaded pistol, or blunderbuss to my breast; for I had heard of such horrid murders in the course of my rambles, as was not a little calculated to work in the imagination, particularly when surrounded by every thing that could depress the mind with gloom and terror. These considerations inclined me to check my rashnes, to procure a guide wherever I

could, to travel as little after dark as possible, and to keep myself always armed. But it is to the overruling God to whom I am to look up for the safety which has always marked my steps: to him I have always been accustomed to resign myself in prostrate humble adoration. It was he whose mercy guarded me in every part of this gloomy and perilous excursion....it is he who has always protected me when I could have expected protection from no other source; who has conducted me back once more to a land of safety; and where, at my ease, I can describe my adventures, and pour out my feelings in the bosom of my friend. Adieu.

LETTER XI.

THIS country, since the revolution, has been blest with almost uninterrupted peace and prosperity. Separated from Europe by a vast ocean; surrounded with no neighbouring power from which she has any thing to fear; and acting with equal justice towards all nations, the strong and the weak; she has wholly escaped from the convulsions of Europe. Her political maxims are to observe a strict neutrality towards the belligerent powers of Europe; to defend her own rights, but never to invade those of another; to rely on her militia for defence, and not on standing armies or expensive navies in time of peace, which so far from affording protection, she looks upon us as the very means of subverting her liberty; and to decline all ambitious temptations of going to war for conquest or for gain. The people have sometimes been hasty and cla-

morous; but the national councils have generally been governed by honour, integrity and moderation. While Europe has been pursuing, through the endless vicissitudes and miseries of war, the empty shadow of military glory, this country has been engaged with vigor and success in the arts of peace, and particularly agriculture and commerce. The extent of its territory in proportion to the population is immense; and land may be purchased extremely cheap. Farming is carried on in an extensive, but not a very skillful plan, and the fields yield an abundant crop, though they exhibit nothing of the beauty of those of China. The commerce of the people embraces almost every part of the known world, and the productions of every kind are emptied at their feet. New towns are daily founded, and the old ones rapidly increasing. The class of merchants, both exporting and importing, have continually increased, and they not only live independent, but many of them have accumulated vast fortunes. The commercial shipping has increased in an equal degree, and the flag of the United States flutters in the most

distant port. Former channels of trade are pursued on a more extensive plan, and new ones are struck out which were formerly unknown.

Such has been the prospering state of this country. Her trade has at times met with partial invasion, or transient incovenience; but never with any general interruption, or fatal difficulty. She has had some misunderstanding with both France and England, and some hostility with the piratical powers of Barbary. In the former cases, though they raised the usual clamour of the people, the difficulty was but partially felt and speedily adjusted. In the latter case, a war could neither exhaust the treasures of the nation, nor materially affect its interests. The Americans who were engaged in these expeditions had not so much to fear from the bravery as the cruelty of their barbarian enemies; nor so much to fear from the danger of battle as of becoming prisoners, whom the latter treated only as their barbarity should dictate or their interest require. The superior advantage of the Americans, however, in arms and shipping, and the superior bravery and discipline

of attack, soon frightened their enemies into terms of peace.

But clouds of difficulty seem of late to have taken place of the sunshine of prosperity.—The country is held in a state of suspence between war and peace, and the people affirm they endure all the difficulties of the former, and none of the blessings of the latter. These difficulties have continually increased to the period at which I am writing, nor do I see any prospect of their speedy termination. The vessels which were formerly seen scattered over the ocean, or unloading their cargo in distant ports, now lie embargoed in the docks, useless, and many of them consuming with worms. The merchants who were formerly engaged in loading and unloading the cargoes of their vessels, and in the various branches of purchase and sale, now see their business at a stand, and are held in perplexing suspence. The farmer, who formerly got a ready and advantageous price for his produce, now sees it housed in his barns, or is compelled to sell it at a reduced price. The sailors, whose element is water, and who were formerly employed in the trade which was carried on to

every part of the world, are now seen wandering about the streets, in want of bread and clothing; or are compelled to fly to some other country for employment. Of the different classes of men who were formerly engaged in business depending on commerce, many are thrown out of employment, the business of all diminished, and some at a loss what course to pursue to gain a subsistence. A thousand false reports of a favourable change of affairs is successively in circulation, and successively contradicted.

Thou, my friend, who livest in a country secure from the convulsions of the rest of the world, with which it could hold no intercourse without being involved in the same; a country which, depending on its own resources, maintains a greater population than what is to be found in any other part of the world....a country which, cultivating the substantial productions of the earth, refuses to dig for or coin those metals which so much attract the attention of the rest of the world, and is the source of so many evils; thou who livest in this happy land to which I now long to return,

will be at a loss to account for this gloomy change in the affairs of the United States.

France and England carry on a war of extermination, which will, no doubt, continue till one or the other shall be subjected or annihiliated....at no former period did it ever assume so savage an aspect as at this time.... each have issued a law authorizing the capture and condemnation of all vessels trading to the ports of the other and its dependancies. The congress of the United States was at this time in session, and though an official account of these laws had not yet arrived, they had sufficient reason to believe that such were in contemplation and probably already issued. The measure which they preferred to adopt was an embargo. They wisely determined to reject that trade altogether which could not be maintained on honourable terms, and to preserve the produce of their country at home, though it should be lessened in value, rather than it should fall into the hands of their enemies.

But though this was a measure which the crisis required, it was not difficult to foresee that it would, in no long time, produce consi-

derable inconvenience. Commerce was not an incidental, but a principal and fundamental pursuit of the nation, with which all others were essentially connected, and a blow given to the first must materially affect the rest and occasion a general embarrassment to the people. Of those articles which had been exported there must be a superfluity; and of those which had been imported, there must be a want. Persons must be thrown out of employment in one trade or business who have neither the skill nor the inclination to pursue any other; and others must be wanting in a different business who are not to be found. Some branches of trade must be curtailed and others enlarged; some abolished and others introduced. To harmonize the different parts of the complicated machine requires time. Labour and skill are in the mean time lost, and labour and skill is the wealth of a nation.

The e British and French decrees have proved the greatest difficulties to a friendly adjustment between those countries and the United States. Previous to the adoption of these measures this country and France were on friendly terms; but there existed other

differences between the United States and Britain, which had created much discussion without producing any satisfactory arrangement. Britain, who seems to pride herself on the strength of her navy, claims the right of searching for her sailors on board the merchant vessels of other nations, and of taking them by force wherever they are to be found. The U. States is the only country with whom there can arise any difficulty in recognizing her sailors, as the same language is common to both countries....with all others the difference of language is a sufficient mark of distinction. The United States claims only her citizens, and Britain only her subjects, but owing to the circumstance just mentioned, ill placed protection will often be extended by the former, and tyrannick seizures exercised by the latter.

While Britain exercises this right herself, she is willing to allow the same to America, but this is no concession on the part of the former, and no object on the part of the latter. The priviledge of searching for deserters is only attached to the navy and not to the mercantile service. The American navy is

small....there are always to be had plenty of hands to man it, and there are few desertions. The officers of the immense British navy, on the contrary, have an opportunity of exercising and abusing this priviledge on board of every American vessel they met. It is on board the British navy that America has most reason to search for her seamen, where they are compelled, by stripes, to fight against a country with whom they are at peace; but the right of searching an armed vessel of another nation, it seems, is contrary to law and custom.

It is worthy of notice to observe the different views with which these countries claim their own sailors. Britain claims hers as slaves who are bound to fight for her honour and interest....the United States claim theirs as citizens whose liberty they are bound to protect. The one insists on the duty which their sailors owe to them....the other insist on the duty which they owe their sailors.

Another material point of dispute between the United States and Britain is what is called the carrying trade. France has several islands in the West Indies, with whom, in time of peace she has a regular intercourse, but in the

present war, this trade has been cut off by the superior navy of Britain....it has been carried on through the ports of the United States and in American vessels....this point Britain disputes.

There is another matter which has occasioned great irritation and clamour. I before remarked that neither Britain nor America claimed a right of searching for their seamen on board of an armed vessel of the other.... this, however, was, in one instance exercised by Britain, An American frigate that had been fitted out for a distant expedition was, at a short distance from the shores of the United States, attacked by an armed vessel of his Britannick majesty, some of her men killed, the frigate greatly damaged and several of the crew taken from on board. This news spread through the country in an instant, and excited one sentiment of rage....in every town the people were immediately formed and organized into volunteer companies....the president issued a proclamation excluding all British armed vessels from the waters within the jurisdiction of the United States, and interdicting all supply of provisions....Congress

was convened by a special call....instructions were sent on to the American ministers in London to require a reparation for the outrage....the papers, whether federal or republican, pronounced the same sentence....the people breathed nothing but war, which was now thought inevitable. This impulse, however, like all violent emotions, soon subsided, but it is still regarded as one of the principal subjects of misunderstanding between the two countries.

The embargo still continues. A large portion of the mercantile part of the community look forward to the next session of congress, expecting it will then be repealed, but I believe the majority of the people are still in its favour. Those who are hostile to the measures, affirm that it was adopted by congress under an expectation that its effect on the belligerent nations would induce them to do the United States justice, but that it has failed to produce this effect, nor is there the least prospect of the same; that it is distressing and ruinous to the United States, whilst it is scarcely felt by those whom it was designed to operate; that the commerce of France with

the United States, previous to the embargo was trifling, and that Britain has abundant vent for her manufactures in Spain and her colonies, since her rupture with France; that the pressure of the embargo is chiefly on the French and Spanish West India islands, who had no share in the act of the parent country, and who had never done the United States the least injury. The other party in reply, affirm that the same reasons which rendered the embargo necessary still remain; that had it not been for this measure, a vast deal of American produce would have been seized and condemned, under the French and British decrees; that these decrees still remain, and have been even more rigorously enforced; that to trade with either of the belligerent nations, whilst each cut off the commerce of the United States with every other country, would be prostrating national dignity and independence; that if the British and French West India islands suffer from the embargo, they must look up to the injustice of the parent countries, as the sourse of the evil, and not the United States. They affirm that the clamours respecting the effect of the embargo

on the country is greatly exaggerated, and that though it is productive of inconvenience, it is not without its concomitant good; that as necessity is the mother of invention, it has induced the country to turn its attention to domestic manufactures; that several are already established and in operation, and others contemplated in every part of the union; that they hope the period is not far distant when America, disdaining to have any intercourse with nations, who disregard all law and justice, will shew the world that she can live on her own internal resources.

The circumstance which chiefly excites the regret of the party in favor of the embargo, is its frequent violation. Rather than see such daily instances of corruption before their eyes, and exposed to the rest of the world, many of them would almost wish the law repealed altogether. Although bond with considerable penalties, is required to insure that every vessel, cleared from any part of the United States, is bound to some other part of the country, although cruizing vessels are employed to guard the coast, and many other restrictions used; the people have found various

ways to evade them all. Sometimes these smugglers seize a favorable time and place to load and sail without the knowledge of the officers, whose duty it is to suppress such trade; sometimes they conform to the requisitions of the law, and pretend to be blown off the coast, and land in distress in some foreign country, where they sell their cargo; and in many instances they have conveyed their property by land to an adjoining territory, where they expect it either in their own vessel, or vessels chartered for the purpose. To provide a remedy for all these invasions, and many others which the ingenuity of those whose ruling passion is love of gain has found out, would be a matter equally complicated and difficult, and after all can never be fully effected. To cut off external commerce must prove a great embarrassment to internal intercourse; and to suppress the licentiousnes of smugglers, must impose great inconvenience on those whose views are honest, and to the people generally.

LETTER XII.

My friend Appolonious of whom I gave some account in a former letter, lately accompanied me to a publick election which he assured me would be a scene both new and pleasing. As soon as we entered the hall where the candidates were seated, and where the people were successively giving in their votes, the countenance of my companion brightened up with joy in viewing the exercise of this important priviledge of his beloved country. After we had satisfied our curiosity, we rambled together to a wood, where my companion gave me an oration on the "enlightened state" of his country. His remarks being altogether the result of that momentary feeling of nationality which was excited in his bosom, they were too general to give me any new or important information. This favourite epithet which the Americans lavish on

themselvas in such a romantick degree, a foreigner is at a loss to discover the meaning of. Like most other expressions of a similar kind, it is too general to be intelligible, and whilst the people extend it to every branch of civilization, a stranger can discover its application to but very few, and even in those not without doubt and hesitation.

In several departments the Americans are perhaps equal to Europe, in some superior, but in many they are certainly below it.

They have the exercise of important political priviledges, but it does not follow that their skill in this science is in an equal degree. The former was guaranteed by the constitution and inherited at their birth: the latter must be acquired by industry and application. The former is in several of the states measured out by the possession of property, which is no criterion of the possession of information, as on the contrary men may have a good education without having a freehold.

From the boast which the Americans make of those important priviledges which they possess, one would suppose that they would

at least be solicitous to acquire that degree of political skill which is necessary to exercise them with discretion. But this duty I apprehend is but feebly felt by the community, and if they attend the publick elections which they do from party zeal it is as much as they perform. The author, the schoolmaster, the mechanick strive to perfect themselves in their respective departments, because this is the foundation of their interest and reputation. But when we look to the community, the duty of acquiring knowledge in their social relations does not operate with the same warmth if it operates at all. According to the maxim of these people, " charity begins at home" and " what is every body's business is no body's business," and notwithstanding all their declarations to the contrary they in no respect evince the truth of these sayings more than in politicks. These reflections are evidently as applicable to publick men as they are to the people, and if the former devote a little more time to the political scenes of their country (which I am not sure is always the case) it is rather for their own reputation or to save themselves from the blush, than from the

disinterested wish to promote the general interest of their country. The extraordinary exertions of the celebrated Grecian Demosthenes to overcome the natural impediments of his speech, proceeded no doubt more from the ambition to excel in eloquence, than from any advantages which his eloquence might bestow on his country. The publick men here are seldom under the influence of the Grecian or Roman enthusiasm. I have heard of several characters who had long exercised the right of suffrage and never thought of studying the institutions of their country until they were themselves prompted by ambition, or the advice of their friends, to offer for some publick office, and then they only study them from the same motive with which a school boy cons over his lesson a few moments before he is called up to be heard by his master.

When I was in Europe and looked forward to the period when I should arrive in this land of freedom; when I saw the independent effusions of its newspaper writings, "This country," said I to myself, "is the true province of a traveller....there I shall not be placed under the painful necessity of courting infor-

mation from a few proud classes of men.... wherever I go those sons of freedom can inform me of the constitution and laws of their country; my enquiries will be satisfied, my doubts removed, and my ignorance dissipated." But alas! how was the picture reversed, how did my charms vanish when I arrived. I had previously procured some of the best books on the institutions and manners of the country that I had heard of, not only that I might be the better qualified to meet the expositions which I should every where hear, but also to save myself from the blush of shame in the various conversations which I should have. But how strangely did these people fall below my expectations when I found that so far from being able to perform the part of an interpreter, their information was in many respects inferior to my own? On some topicks they were totally uninformed and on others their ideas were erroneous, scanty, and illiberal. Some regarded my enquiries with entire indifference, others seemed to think them intended for a reflection on them, and others seemed to be ingeniously awakened to their ignorance; but few, indeed, were capable of entering into any rational dis-

cussion, or of giving me any important information. The federal constitution itself though it is the palladium of publick liberty, and in the mouth of every one, is read by few.

In a short excursion in the country soon after my arrival here, I fell into company with a farmer on the road, we travelled on together until we came opposite to a house which he informed me was his, and requested me to call and stay with him all night, with which I complied. We had been talking on politicks, and I accidentally asked him if he had ever read the constitution. "No," replied he, "I have often heard of it but never read it. "It was as my paper tells me, framed by wise "men, and tends to secure our liberty, and "that is enough for me. I have not time to "devote to these difficult subjects. There "are many of your over curious philosophers "that get immersed in these matters, neglect "their private affairs, become bewildered, and "find themselves involved in a thousand diffi-"culties. My newspaper is my guide, and I "do all I can to knock down federalism; I "attend every election, rain, hail or shine,

" for they shall never get an inch of ground " from us."

From the preceding statement thou wilt at once perceive the two reasons why the political knowledge of the people of this country is neither so general nor so correct as a stranger would imagine. In the first place they do not sufficiently study their prominent political institutions; and in the next place they are too much governed by the flimsy representation of party writers. They are in this view like a vessel without her helm, and driven whithersoever the wind may direct. Viewing the publick law, and newspaper writing, as two distinct departments and sources of information, this difference occurs. The institutions of law are permanent and fixed: the effusions of newspapers are as changeable as the wind. All the parts of the former agree and conspire to make one system: those of the latter are as contradictory and clashing as the account of the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel; the former serves as a rule of conduct to publick men, and of course a rule of judging for the people; the latter serves only

to abuse or to flatter the conduct of the one, and mislead the judgment of the other.

Thou must not conclude from this letter that the people of this country are more ignorant of political science than the people of Europe. They are, I think, in this respect, above the people of Europe, though they certainly fall far below their own romantick ideas. In the controul which they have over the publick administration, they are too apt to confound knowledge with power, and think they are illuminated with the one, when they are only in the dormant possession of the other. On the other hand, it must be recollected that where political priviledges are possessed and exercised by all classes of citizens; where political topicks in so many shapes come under their inspection, and are so frequently the subject of conversation, it is impossible but the people must acquire a degree of political skill unknown to countries immersed in slavery, and though this knowledge is not very brilliant it is pretty general.

LETTER XIII.

Appolonius and myself have now become inseperable companions. We walk, we ride, we comment and converse together. In all his sentiments respecting his own country he gives me (without perhaps being aware of it) only one side of the question, and the other I must find out from my own observation and reflection. For this reason I am not always disposed to receive his opinions as infallible. When this is the case a warm discussion generally ensues....and I, by this means, derive many hints which I could not otherwise obtain, while the good nature of my companion precludes the possibility of displeasing him by the freedom of my remarks. In a late conversation with him, he unfolded to me at some length the government of his country and endeavoured to shew its superiority to that of any other. In speaking of the legislative

body he observed...." There we hear no slavish allusions to empty titles, but the honour and interest of the nation is what rouses their energies and governs their proceedings."

It is true, replied I, that this body have great and honourable duties to perform; but I fear thy national partiality carries thee too far when thou supposest they are performed in such an irreproachable manner as stated.—They have, it is true, no kings to revere, but they are subjects to the demon of party; and if they use no slavish allusions to titles above them, they use very harsh epithets towards each other. Scarcely, I believe, does a session pass over in which there does not occur much unnecessary harshness in the publick debates and even private misunderstandings. Challenges are sometimes passed and duels sometimes follow. Thou wilt recollect that in one instance two individuals, even in the hall of congress, forgot themselves so far as to lay aside the character of legislators and take up that of boxing champions, and instead of arguments tried what effect hard blows would have. I hope this candour will forgive the freedom of my remarks, since I believe they

are sanctioned by truth....they relate to the American Congress, and can have no allusion to thee.

"Alas!" exclaimed Appolonius, "your answer is of that severe kind which, though I know to be exaggerated, banish my ideas and leave me without the power of reply. Your remarks, you say, are on the American Congress, and not on me, but I thought you were sufficiently acquainted with me to know that my publick patriotism is almost as strong as my private feelings and to satirize my country is little less than to satirize me. However, I am ready to believe that this proceeded from the freedom of your manner and not from any acrimony, and I will not, therefore, suffer either you or myself to dwell on the circumstance. To return to your remarks on Congress....I cannot but think there is more ingenuity than candour in what you said, and that you know you were only exhibiting one side of the picture. The acrimony of discussion you would make a vice peculiar to the American Congress, when it is no more than a weakness belonging to the whole human race. In a body where there exists such free-

dom of discussion there will always be some degree of severity attached to it; and in a body composed of so many members there will always be some who will act disorderly. These circumstances are not peculiar to our legislature, but prevails in those where far less freedom of enquiry is enjoyed. The impatience of argument takes place too as universally in private conversation as in publick debates, and the severity with which you yourself spoke a while ago is a proof of it."

I know, replied I, that this frailty is common in private life, but when men assume a publick character, their conduct should assume a correspondent change, and they should no longer suffer their private feelings to govern them. The cause of the publick is not promoted but perverted by such conduct. When congress is assembled in the hall dedicated to the independence of the nation: when the constitution alone should be their guide, is this the time or the occasion for them to indulge their private animosities? I cannot but think that this folly (owing perhaps to the peculiar freedom of your government) is more common and carried to greater extremes in

the American congress than almost any other publick body. The instances I mentioned are a strong indication of this truth, and I did not advert to them from a view to exaggerate, but because they were so prominent as could not escape my notice. I perceive too that we differ on this subject in the most essential particular....thou seemest to look upon this as a matter of mere etiquette, but I look upon it as a matter of deep national importance. Under monarchal governments, indeed, the operation of party spirit is always salutary, but in republican governments its violence is much to be dreaded. By the firmness and wisdom of congress the liberty of the people may be preserved and their interest promoted; when publick infatuation or party violence might endanger the one and defeat the cause of the other. Though men in power receive their authority from the people they should not give up the dictates of their own judgment but should promote the interest and not adopt the follies of their constituents.

"I perceive" answered my friend "that you have shifted the point in dispute and finding yourself unable to maintain the first,

you have artfully assumed another which bears to it some analogy Your remarks which at first only related to the impatience of discussion, now embrace the general principle of party violence, which at first only related to congress and the administration, now embrace the government and the people. I have only to say in reply, that the spirit of party whose effects you so much deprecate, is not only inseparable from the very existence of a popular government but absolutely necessary for its salutary operation, and that we have heretofore enjoyed all its blessings without any of its evils. The enemies of our country and the enemies of our government, have been eagerly looking for some occurrence which would gratify their hostility and justify their political tenets, but in vain. Many I believe who were once enemies to a republican government in theory are now induced from its happy example in this country, to yield to it the tribute which it deserves. If foreign nations are so blinded by prejudice that they cannot perceive its beauty, it is sufficient that we Americans can, and that we are at all times ready to sacrifice our lives in its support.

Thousands of individuals in those countries that pretend to despise our government are often glad enough to fly to it for an assylum. The only thanks however, which we get by affording them protection, is their abuse while at home, though they groaned under oppression they dared not complain."

These replied I are sentiments both natural and honourable. It is wisely ordained by providence that every people should not only be satisfied with, but partial to the government whatever it may be under which they live, and the people of a monarchy are as ready to sacrifice their lives in support of their King, as this country in support of its liberty. But viewing the matter in an abstract point of view I cannot think the example of the United States affords any strong argument for the permanence of a republican government. Popular governments founded on principles less wise than those of the constitution of this country have existed longer; but I do not think that any example, ancient or modern, afford a decisive argument on the subject.

Among the many discussions which have taken place on this subject, there appears to

me to be a distinction which has not been sufficiently attended to, and it is my impression that a republican government is productive of most happiness, and a monarchal one most permanent. It is true that in this country the example of the former has been salutary and the prospect is still brilliant and pleasing, but let us take circumstances into consideration. This republick is as yet but just established, the revolution still fresh in every persons mind, many are living who bore a part in it; and it would surely be surprising if the people could already think of destroying that fabrick, the erection of which cost their fathers so much blood, toil, and difficulty. The circumstances of the history of this country too, since the revolution have not been such as to lead ye from the path of duty. Ye have enjoyed an almost uninterrupted peace, had few temptations to encounter, and few difficulties to contend with. But is it not to be feared that as the country grows older, domestick corruption will take place, and publick disasters follow? Nay, if we inspect your history since the revolution, we shall not be at a loss even at this early period, to disco-

ver symptoms of that disease so hostile to the permanence of a republick.

At the conclusion of the revolution strong indications of an actual insurrection began to appear among the army, and had it not been for the firmness and personal influence of the commander in chief, might have led to fatal consequences. When after peace was concluded, and a war broke out between France and England, such was the infatuation of this country, that they were almost impelled openly, to take up arms against the latter, which might have entailed endless evil without the least prospect of advantage. The treaty of ninety four occasioned equal irritation and greater clamour against the government. In some parts of the federal administration, during the term of Mr. Adams, party spirit assumed a degree of violence far worse than the acrimony or scurrility of newspaper writing, and the people were in some parts almost ready to rise in open rebellion. Even at the present period, is not the opposition of a large portion of the people to the measures of government, and their impatience under the pressure of the embargo, and the stagnation of

trade great and alarming. Though it was thought at the time it was adopted, a measure of prudence and necessity, and I am told is thought so still in foreign countries, yet such is the opposition to it here, that it is daily repeated, and believed that if not repealed, it will occasion a revolt of the eastern from the western states. A division of the union will be the destruction of the constitution, and cannot take place probably without an effusion of blood. Think not that these reflections give me any pleasure. Gladly would I believe that your government were immortal! Most devoutly do I wish that ye may always reap the same benefit from it that ye have done heretofore.

"And I" replied my companion "not only hope so, but have no doubt but it will be the case. The great misfortune is that you being a foreigner, and altogether unacquainted with the customs of a republic, view them in a distorted shape. Liberty you construe into licentiousness, and clamours which to you appear big with terror, are in the eyes of a citizen perfectly harmless. Believe what I tell you, and you may rest assured that the rumours you have

mentioned are wholly without foundation, and like those thousands which in every country and every age, serve to amuse the credulity of mankind. The eastern states impute the hostility to the western states, and the western states impute it to the eastern states; but in fact it is to be found neither in the east nor the west; the north nor the south. One half of the people tell the tale, and the other half believe it; but the being who would put it in execution is no where to be found, and the mere offspring of imagination. That there exists at present considerable freedom of discussion I readily grant, but little more than what has existed ever since the establishment of our government, and which is inseparable from it. You might as well suppose that when the sky is overcast with clouds, that the sun will never more be seen, as to suppose that the transient clamours of the present day can destroy or weaken our glorious constitution. The people are not so stupid as to plunge into the horrors of civil war, to remove a difficulty for which the constitution itself provides a sufficient remedy. If publick men abuse their duties, the people can easily re-

move them and put others in their place.—This is the course which always has been adopted, and I hope always will be.

"Adhering to your system, that republicks are not calculated to last, you nevertheless acknowledge their benevolent and salutary tendency. You say a popular government is best calculated to secure the happiness of the people, and a monarchal one best calculated to last. This is acknowledging in substance, that monarchies are oppressive, and in this light it is certainly no recommendation, but a misfortune that they are calculated to last.—We must look upon it as a consuming disease, which the people cannot get rid of too soon; as a galling yoke, which the sooner they can throw off the better. But even on the ground of durability, I do not think that any inference disadvantageous to the government of the United States can be drawn. You cannot draw any argument from the example of ancient republicks, because that of the United States is not only far superior, but altogether different from any thing of the kind that ever existed, and the framers of our constitution profited from both ancient and modern history.

The freedom of the people, and the power of rulers are so judiciously divided, as equally to exclude the licentiousness of the former, and the tyranny of the latter. The different departments of government are so wisely organized as to afford a mutual check; and so accurately prescribed that neither can encroach on the duties of another. That our government should possess these excellencies cannot be doubted, when you consider the enlightened crisis which gave it birth, and the peculiar circumstances which attended its formation. Neither ambition, power, accident, nor prejudice, had any share in its creation. It was the joint production of a body equally learned and accute, delegated by their country for this duty, and who had no other wish at heart, but to perform it wisely and faithfully."

Thy national enthusiasm in favor of thy government, replied I, commands my respect; but I cannot but think it somewhat like the enthusiasm of a lover who attributes to his mistress a thousand charms which are the offspring of his own fancy. Without entering into a discussion on the comparative excellence of the republick of this country, and

those of ages past, I must believe that the principle of their operation is pretty nearly the same, and that where so much power is possessed by the people, it is as likely to be absurd at the present day, as it was at any former period. You say the people are not so stupid as to plunge into the horrors of civil war, to obviate an inconvenience for which the constitution provides a sufficient remedy. The constitution indeed supposes that a majority should rule. But in the intervals of election, this principle cannot be ascertained, and if it could be ascertained the minority are not always disposed to submit to the majority.—When parties are under this ungovernable phrenzy they cannot submit, or even advert to the cold dictates of duty. Thus, the great disadvantage of a republick is the fluctuating disposition of the people, and their continual aptness to be carried to extremes. Party spirit among them is sometimes so violent as to derange the wheels of government; at other times so weak as not to afford to them a sufficient check. Sometimes the people are persecuting and cruel to their publick characters; at other times they place in them a dangerous

confidence, and look up to them with an adulation approaching that which subjects pay their sovereign. Sometimes they are ready to be led on by violent ambitious demagogues, at other times they are lulled into apathy, and submit to the silent, progressive and plausible encroachments of those in power, and are awakened when it is too late to a sense of their situation.

"Alas!" exclaimed my companion, "instead of drawing a fair comparison between a monarchy and a republick, and noting the prominent features in each, you keep nothing but a republick in view and magnify its evils, but forget its blessings. That a republick has its inconveniences like every thing else on this earthly scene, no one will doubt; but if it is productive of more happiness, and fewer evils than a monarchy, that is sufficient to determine its excellence, and decide the predilection of an impartial mind. Without considering that our constitution is altogether different from those of ages past, you apply to the former all the defects of the latter. Without considering the happy experiment and salutary tendency of it exhibited in our history,

you indulge yourself in melancholy reveries with respect to the future. Notwithstanding all that you have said about publick demagogues, party spirit, and danegrous apathy, I find nothing in our history; nothing in our future prospects which can justify your conclusions. Our great and good Washington had indeed the gratitude of his country for unparalleled political and military services, yet in every part of his administration there existed among the people sufficient freedom of discussion to keep both branches of government on their guard. His successor Mr. Adams was warmly and generally condemned for the principles he espoused, but the people were not carried to any dangerous or ridiculous extremes: there existed among them sufficient freedom of opinion to exhibit both sides of the question, and they were satisfied with removeing him from office and placing the executive authority in the hands of another, whom they conceived would pursue a different course."

I have transcribed this dialogue as nearly as I can recollect, because it affords perhaps a curious picture of the different manner in which different persons sometimes view the

same subject. It may also serve as a general view of the opinions of these people concerning their government. I give the concluding marks in the sentiments of my companion, because I am not ambitious of any honour which I might have derived from the argument, and because I know that whether my opinions were given last or those of my companion it would have little influence on the strength and rectitude of they understanding, whatever may be your opinion on the subject. Adieu.

LETTER XIV.

It has been a hackneyed remark of the philosopher and the peasant; the ambitious and the unaspiring; the avaricious and the contented; the idle and the laborious; the man of pleasure and the man of business; the young and the old; male and female....that man is never satisfied with what he may at present possess, but is constantly looking forward to what he may, in future, enjoy. These pleasing hopes are not drawn from the laws of things but our own chimeras. The present is always depreciated, the future magnified, and the past forgotten. We let go the substance to grasp at the shadow, and to avoid imaginary evils plunge into such as are real. And what is the conclusion? Be contented with the present, provide decently for the future, and be not perplexed with imaginary evils. Of this maxim every heart is convinced, and every tongue

eloquent, but few give the example in their own conduct. All can point out the course to others, but none can lead the way....all are ready to command, but none to obey. When men exhort it is with a confident air and an ardent manner; when they listen it is with a cold nod of assent they stretch and yawn.—The former wonder that such an indisputable truth should fail to make its due impression; the latter wonder to hear such a trite observation repeated. It is easy to perceive that it will be preached and acknowledged to the end of the world, but that mankind will as invariably pursue the course, they do, as the earth will continue to revolve in its orbit.

It may be from this universal spirit of discontent that I have heard in every country the complaint of hard times. It is the cant at all times and among all classes, and is so common that it is impossible to know when it is true. One would suppose if any country was exempt from this absurd complaint it would be the United States. While they declaim against the tyranny and pity the misery of every other country, they extol their own as the land of

liberty and happiness, the assylum of the oppressed of every other country. Such is their national exultation, but when I mix among individuals, hard times is the constant subject of complaint. In the former case the blessings are magnified and the evils forgotten: in the latter the evils are magnified and the blessings forgotten. Yet, what is national prosperity and happiness, but individual prosperity and happiness? Why boast of the one and be dissatisfied with the individual portion which they possess of the other? When the sun shines, or the air is pure, do not all equally enjoy the blessing?

This complaint of "hard times" every one makes use of to suit his own views. If a man involves himself in debt without considering the prudence of the step or the means of paying, and is reminded by his creditor that the time is past when he should have paid, he declares that he has made every exertion he possibly could, but such is "the hardness of the times" that it is impossible either to make money or collect it: but reminds him that times cannot continue long in their present aspect, and he may rest assured of being soon

paid. If a publican should not accommodate his customers so well as they may have reason to expect; if his beef is lean, his poultry poor or his vegetables scarce, he makes an humble apology, assures them that it has always been his exertion to procure the best, but that the markets are so badly supplied, and these articles so high that he could not provide as he wished, and reminds them that it cannot be otherwise, when they take into view the difficulty of the times. If a dependant recounts to his employer the services he has rendered, or states the insufficiency of his present pay, the latter tells him that should the times grow better he will think about it, but that they are at present too dull to admit of any thing more. If an old batchelor who is affluent in fortune, and easy in his situation, is asked why he does not get married, he observes, that in that case he should have to make additions to his house, buy new furniture, and enter into many expences which the hardness of the times forbid him to think of. If a man enters into a new trade or business, and finds that it does not answer his expectations; if his profits are not equal to his expen-

ces, he still consoles himself under the reflection that he cannot judge from so hasty a trial, that his difficulties necessarily arise from the "hardness of the times" but that these clouds will soon blow over, and a brilliant horizon open to view. If an old maid, grown ugly and ill natured, is quized on the subject of her situation; she declares that such is the difficulty of the times, that the men are altogether taken up in their pecuniary affairs, that they have no prospect of getting married, and that she had much rather remain with her father, mother, uncle, or aunt, than to get married and contend with the "hardness of the times."

LETTER XV.

The more I trace the national character of these people, the more I have occasion to observe their extravagant egotism. The Chinese, from time immemorial, have considered their country as the center of the earth, and all beyond it as contemptible appendages: the people here look upon theirs as the spot of perfection, and all beyond it as overrun with wretchedness and error. Hence they style it "the assylum of the oppressed of every other nation." Their laws, indeed, in relation to foreigners, do not want philanthropy; but the people are but little governed by the like spirit, and foreigners here, as in every other country, are looked upon with a jealous eye. Some they consider as perverted by maxims of tyranny: others as intoxicated with the stream of liberty, and all who happen to differ from them on politicks, are proscribed

as enemies to the country. No nation so they load with more opprobrious epithets than Britain, though it is not only the wisest government of Europe, but that from which the United States itself has received almost the whole body of its most valuable laws. Thus they praise the purity of the stream while they declaim against the corruption of the source, they enjoy the fruit but despise the tree from which it was gathered. While they boast of their superior laws, they forget that these laws are in almost all their relations, secured, traced, and defined by the numerous volumes of British precedents and British commentaries. While their eyes dart fury against the tyranny of Great Britain, their students consume the midnight oil over the volumes of Blackstone and Coke, their judges revolve them in mind in giving a legal decision, and their lawyers strive with all the art of sophistry or the evidence of truth, to shew that their conclusion is drawn from these indubitable authorities. Their own jurisprudence they look upon as having no fault, that of every other country as having no excellence.

But let me not go too far, or be led into extremes in the one way as the Americans are in the other. Let me not forget that I have aspired to the elevated character of a citizen of the world; that I am a spectator and not an actor in the scenes which pass in review before me. I will not deny then, that the Americans have in several respects, greatly improved the British code, and rendered it not only more congenial to their own peculiar form of government, but better calculated to secure the rights and happiness of the people. Britain indeed is the mine from which the materials generally have been imported, but these materials have in many cases undergone a new operation; the dross thrown away and the pure metal alone retained. The venerable edifice of the British common law was established here long before the revolution, but since that period it has received new additions, and more splendid decorations, and strikes the enlightened friend of man with more divine rapture. The benign Goddess of Justice that sits in it smiles alike on all who seek it for an assylum, and in her apartments are no invidious distinctions. As the dawn

of the revolution diffused the enthusiasm of liberty, and inspired universally new views of government and law, the people naturally rejected every trait of the British law which wore an arristocratick or monarchal cast. These changes were differently modified in the different states. There are some traits, however, that emanated from the new order of things, which appear to be pretty general.

As all the old European systems of the connection between church and state, together with the different degrees of religious authority was rejected, so care was taken that no other species of religious tyranny should be introduced, and that every one should enjoy the priviledge of believing and propagating whatever religion he choose. The law requires no contribution for the support of religion, and no particular religion is either sanctioned or proscribed. How happy are the people of this country in this particular! In how many shapes has religion been made the instrument of the most dreadful oppression. How often has an innocent or inadvertent expression been regarded by the jaundiced eye of religious fanaticism as a subject of heinous

accusation; consigned the culprit to the damps and darkness of a dungeon, or led him to the stake to expire in flames amidst the shouts and huzzas of a numerous multitude, assembled to enjoy the scene. Oh, ye bloodthirsty, deluded fanaticks! is it thus ye would worship God, by murdering your fellow men.

Though the government in this country has not yielded any pecuniary support to religion this circumstance has not given that blow to it which foreign countries predicted. Christianity, which the people inherited from their fathers, was at the revolution as it is now, the reigning religion of the age, and the people rejected all legal interference, not because they doubted the truth of this religion, but because they believed such interference an infringement on their general liberty. They conceived, and justly too, that all men cannot think alike on the same subject, and that if this was practicable, the only fair means of promoting or obtaining it is through the internal evidence of religion itself, that the mind cannot, like the body, be fettered, and that force can never supply the place of argument.

The only method, I believe, in which the government has undertaken to assist the cause of religion is now and then to authorize a lottery to raise a sum for religious purposes, but in this they have not, I believe, been partial to any particular sect. It is also a method adopted to promote other publick objects, as cutting canals, building bridges, academies, &c.

That this was a noble proof of the independent spirit of the people cannot be doubted, but I doubt whether it has been any advantage to religion itself. Its branches may be more numerous in consequence, but its roots not more vigorous. On religion, as on every other subject there will always be a portion who are neutral or wavering, and these are more likely to be increased than diminished by the numerous divisions which they observe. While each sect affirm their own to be the only true creed those are inclined to doubt them all. They are disposed to wonder how Christianity, if it was clear in its doctrine and consistent in its parts, could give rise to so many different, and even contradictory, creeds, and are ready to believe that if it is not

actually false, must at least be very obscure and doubtful. Their situation is somewhat like that of a judge in a court of justice, who hears the same fact stated in such different manner by different witnesses, that his mind is left in a state of doubt and suspence. Some sects will appear to be too lukewarm; others too enthusiastic; and there will always be some whose extravagant follies will be the subject of ridicule, not only to deists, but to mankind in general. If, on the contrary, religion was clothed with some degree of authority, the people would look up to her with more respect and reverence, but the misfortune is, she would be too apt to abuse her priviledge, and discarding the principles of benevolence would exercise the rod of oppression.

But to return from this digression. Another characteristic difference between the laws of Britain and of this country, is that they are here less sanguinary, and operate more equally. As the highest officers of the government are elected by the people for short periods, and are always responsible for their conduct in office, the laws of course partake of this cast,

and acknowledge no distinction between one citizen and another. The British King while he has the power of declaring war, or making peace; while in many instances he has the power of life and death over his subjects, is himself subject to no law. The persons of the British lords are sacred, and they can only be tried by a jury of their own peers, but here the highest officer of government stands on the same footing with the meanest citizen, and with respect to trial by jury, they have no other priviledge but to object to any individuals of the jury who are supposed to be under the influence of personal pique or prejudice, which is also a priviledge enjoyed by every citizen. But to return to the British King. There is something extremely absurd in the maxim of English law, that ministers alone are responsible for the faults of administration. While it shields the person of the King from the law, it reduces his official character to a mere cypher. It literally supposes that he has neither power nor capacity to direct the wheels of government, and that he is entirely under the controul of ministers. While he has the sole power of selecting and displacing

his ministers: while they are in every respect under his command, and acknowledge him their master; this maxim supposes him only their satellite, no more than a clock in their hands, and who are therefore alone responsible for any irregularities of its motion.

When I consider that in all publick elections as well as publick proceedings in this country, a majority rules; and that the people seem to look upon this as the polar star of their liberty, I am inclined to wonder why the same principle has not been adopted in trial by jury. On the contrary the practice here, as in Britain, requires the verdict to be unanimous. On no subject is it practicable that a number of men can always be of the same opinion, and if it was practicable it is not necessary. If indeed the jury generally yield to the same opinion, it is to be presumed they do it rather to save themselves from the inconvenience of being detained, than because they think it just. But even this miserable expedient is not always adopted, and a single man and often for the most whimsical reason has been known to detain a jury and embarrass a cause for several days. I am much mistaken

if it does not also frequently give to designing men who are party to the cause, the power of securing by persuasion or bribery, the vote of one or two of the jury, which if it does not always answer their purpose, is certainly a palpable obstruction to the free and pure administration of justice.

In place of the too sanguinary laws of Europe this country has adopted a plan which they conceive to be more wise and humane. In the principal states they have established penitentiary houses, where mechanical trades of different kinds are taught, and where each of the unhappy beings who are confined in them are compelled to learn, and work at one of these trades. Is this sentence, my friend, or is it not preferable to death? It is at least more congenial to the leading principles and wishes of man who is always disposed to cling to life, however bitter the draught, and therefore it may be pronounced more humane. But I confess that when I have visited those solitary cells the depression of my feelings but little inclined me to listen to the copious expositions of my interpretors respecting the humanity of the plan, and the advantage accruing to the

publick. When I considered the death-like uniformity with which the life of those unfortunate beings must drag on; when I looked around me and beheld the sadness depicted in their countenances, my feelings were such as it would be in vain to express. But alas! how does selfishness mix with our most humane emotions, for was it not selfishness which induced me to say "I can never witness these scenes again".

It is stated, that in some of the states these institutions, besides being sufficient to support the prisoners and defray the expences of management generally yield an annual income to the state. They are certainly conducted with all the humanity which the case will admit of, and every means embraced to give a ray of hope to the unfortunate prisoners. All who particularly distinguish themselves for industry and good behaviour stand a good chance to have the period of their confinement shortened and their liberty restored. It is even stated that this method of punishment has brought many back to a moral life, and therefore these institutions have not improperly received the name of "Penitentiaries." In

whatever light they may be viewed, they have certainly been established from good motives and from the insuperable reluctance of the people to shedding the blood of their fellow citizens in legal cases.

LETTER XVI.

The great defect of an hereditary government is the despotick power which rulers exercise over the people; the great defect of an elective government is the despotick power which the people exercise over rulers. The cruelty of the Athenian mobs was as great as that of the Roman emperors, and the fate of Socrates, Aristides, and Phocion, is as much calculated to awaken our sympathy, as any acts committed by the latter. This, however may be said in favour of the republican government, that though the people have their follies, there is more reason in the principle, that the whole should have despotick power over a few, than that a few should have despotick power over the whole.

You will be inclined to ask whether the evil of a republican government, which I have just mentioned, has yet appeared in this coun-

try. With respect to publick trials by law, I must answer that it has not. This appears to be owing partly to the excellence of the constitution and laws of the coutry, and partly to the political integrity inseparable from a rising republick. The manner of proceeding against publick characters here, is very different from what it was in the republicks of Rome and Athens, and while it allows the accused person superior priviledges, is better calculated to secure the ends of justice. Here he is brought before a hall of justice, where the judge or judges who preside, are compelled to decide agreeable to law, and not agreeable to the popular temper or opinion of the people. He is alowed the priviledge of counsel, time to collect his witnesses, and even legal process to compel their attendance. Under this arrangement, it is seldom that an unjust sentence can take place. But in the Roman and Athenian republicks, the manner of proceeding was totally different, and their publick men were more at the disposal of the fluctuating temper of the people, than of any regular form of trial. The priviledges of the accused were few or wholly insufficient for the purposes of

justice. The turbulent disposition of the people left no hope of a fair trial, and the sentence of banishment or death was often passed on their most celebrated worthies, without the shadow of guilt.

To affirm, however, that the despotism of the people is in this country wholly excluded from publick trials, would be to affirm what can never take place in any republick. Under every popular government there is so close a connection between publick officers and the people, that the conduct of the former must always be influenced in some degree by the prevailing temper of the latter. In trials where the publick mind is strongly agitated, the judges must possess a high degree of intrepidity, and be almost exempt from human weakness, if they can wholly escape the prevailing contagion, whether it be for or against the accused. It is probable, however, that this impulse is felt in a less degree by the judicial than it is by the legislative authorities. The officers of the former department are appointed and removed by the legislature and the executive; those of the latter are elected and discontinued by the people themselves. The

former never receive petitions from the people, because the abstract province of their duty supposes the people have no knowledge therein; the latter frequently receive such petitions and always pay to them great attention. The former must make the abstract and complicated science of law the polar star of their conduct; the latter must act according to the immergency and circumstances of the crisis, of which the people are not only supposed to have full knowledge, but in which their feelings are always excited in a lively and sometimes an extravagant degree.

The highest judicial court of the United States is composed of the members of congress itself. There is no stated period for its sitting, which only takes place in cases of impeachment, and these rarely occur. It is here that the president of the United States, ministry and federal judges themselves are tried. The manner of proceeding in a judicial capacity, becomes different from what it was in a legislative capacity, and in the former case the law is the rule of decision.

From what I have stated then, thou wilt discover that publick characters are not here so

much at the mercy of the fluctuating temper of the people, as they were in the ancient republicks....but with respect to the portion of power which belongs exclusively to the people, it is exercised in a manner at once despotick and absurd. Publick offices are disposed of in a manner truly capricious. The liberty of the press is made the instrument of personal abuse, rather than of publick investigation; and popularity, another gift of the people, rests on a foundation equally precarious and absurd.

Two things must conspire to render an administration popular. It must in the first place be consistent with the political creed of the majority of the nation, which is for the most part founded in strong party prejudice.... and secondly, it must have a plausible outside appearance. When a majority of the nation elects a publick character to office, it is considered a glorious triumph, and they are always inclined to support him in difficulty or prosperity. This they do not because they think his conduct always right, but because they think it necessary to secure the honour of their party and the success of their cause.

There is one method however by which publick favour is easily lost, and this is by acting in contradiction to some leading principle of the creed of the popular party. It is then considered that the person guilty of this breach has forfeited their confidence, abandoned their cause, and gone over to the other party; and while the one party brand him as a political apostate, the other receive him as an independent friend of his country, who would no longer adhere to a cause which he found inimical to the interest of the nation.

To render an administration popular it must in the next place have a plausible outside appearance. Truly speaking, we cannot judge of publick men by the prosperity or difficulty of the crisis, but the measures which were used to promote the one and avert the other. The most ignorant mariner may steer the vessel when the wind is fair, the points of land known, and the sky serene, but the most experienced may be baffled where all is enveloped in darkness, and the vessel assailed with violent storms. There are difficulties in the political horizon which it is no more in the power of the statesman to controul than it is

in the power of the mariner to controul the elements. The publick however, the impatient, the fluctuating publick, attend but little to this distinction, and are ever inclined to judge from the prosperity, and not the wisdom of an administration. When the country is on the eve of war they affirm that it might have been prevented had the government been satisfied with peace on reasonable terms; but when they have received a real or imaginary insult from a foreign nation, they are not only roused to the utmost, but affirm that it would never have been offered had it not been for the known pusillanimity of their own government. Publick difficulties create publick irritation, and publick irritation is not a temper in which to make a fair estimation of men and measures. Indeed this requires not only great moderation of temper, but also a degree of political sagacity and political knowledge which does not fall to the share of the people in general. Many have not even the time or the opportunity to devote the necessary attention to the subject: others have not the common or necessary rudiments of education, and many depend for information on the flying

rumours of the day, on the flimsy representation of violent partizans. Thus the full detail of publick proceedings and the many subtle points which they embrace, are but partially understood (and a smattering of knowledge is often worse than none at all); but the actual difficulties of the crisis strikes the senses and awakens the indignation. Every department of knowledge has its own terms, and there are many who are so ignorant of politicks that they cannot ever speak on the subject without helping themselves out, with the terms of their own trade or profession. Their situation is somewhat like that of a sailor on land and of course out of his element, and when he would speak of the objects around him, is compelled to use sea phrases which, while they are unintelligible to some, excite the risibility of others.

LETTER XVII.

Some excentrick characters, warm with general benevolence have doubted, whether upon the eternal and reciprocal principles of justice, we have a right to subject inferior animals to toil and labour, for our convenience, or to destroy them for our food. This indeed is one of those subjects in which we are so much under the influence of interest, and habit, that it is impossible for us to decide fairly. The truly enlightened philosopher, soaring above human prejudices, will consider it with sceptical feelings, while to those who are immersed in the universal cloud of ignorance, such a proposition would be looked upon with indifference, or treated with ridicule. Could the poor brutes be allowed to have a voice on this subject, they would certainly pronounce their treatment tyrannical and unjust. Could they be supposed to have any know-

ledge of the relation of things they would cer-
tainly look upon us with the same feelings
and abhorence, with which we look upon the
tyrant who riots in human blood.

There is one reflection however that migh
lead us to believe, that in exercising the do
minion which we hold over inferior animals
we only act within the limits which the al
mighty seems to have prescribed for us, and
to have followed the course which his provi
dence has pointed out. For reasons onl
known to the adorable creator, it seems to b
a law throughout the creation, that one clas
of animals should serve as food for anothe
class. This is evinced not only from a pro
pensity to pursue their prey, but by the pro
perties which each possess for the executio
of their purpose.

How far this reasoning may be conclusive
I pretend not to say, but if inferior anima
were intended for our use, it certainly doe
not follow that we are authorized to tre
them in a tyrannical manner. If we act in co
formity to the design of the Almighty, the
captivity may be rendered to them a blessin
rather than a curse. We should make u

f our power to protect, and not to oppress
iem. Surely if we enjoy the benefit of their
ibour, it is the least that we can do to treat
iem with kindness. Why should not a good
iaster feel the same sentiments towards his
omestick animals, which a good prince does
owards his people? Who does not feel a
iendship for a good horse, or faithful dog?
Who feels not gratitude when he looks upon
he patient laborious ox, that tills his field,
vhile perhaps he reposes under the shade,
nd enjoys the goodly scene? But ah! sacred
God, with what indescribable emotions has
ny heart been oppressed, when I have seen
he tyrant man, exercise his cruelty over his
ielpless domesticks: and I would not part
vith these feelings for all the wealth, and pow-
r of the world. Oh man, thinkest thou not
hat thou wilt have to account for thy cruelty,
efore the tribunal of heaven? Thinkest thou
hat thy poor domesticks, who toil for thy
upport, are susceptible of no feeling, or enti-
led to no gratitude? Cowardly man! 'tis
hine to exercise power with boundless des-
otism where it is given thee, and to shrink

from it with debasing submission, when exercised over thyself.

I have been led into these reflections, from a scene to which I have lately been a spectator, and which to my feelings, is little inferior in atrocity to the spectacle of the roman gladiators. The practice I allude to is very common in this country, and particularly in Virginia, and is here called amusement. This amusement consists in matching two cocks, with sharp pointed irons so fixed to their legs as to wound each other at every flutter, and the owner of him who kills the other, wins the wager. This barbarous practice generally continues the whole day, and sometimes for several days together. I was at one of those spectacles, but never wish to be at another, both on account of my feelings for the agony which the poor animals seemed to endure; and my burning indignation against the savage joy, which the cruel and cowardly spectators evince. The high spirited animals panting for breath, suffocated with heat, and almost choaked with blood, are looked upon with no other feeling but a vehement desire for a continuation of the battle. At every

wound there is an infernal shout. The great Washington did not feel more joy upon the happy result of a battle which he conceived tended to promote the future independence and happiness of his country, than on these occasions do those wretches evince in winning a few sordid dollars. True it is, my friend, that my feelings were precisely those which I should have felt, had I ever been present at an ante de foé. When I heard the tumultuous shouts of the spectators, my heart died within me. When I looked round and saw the stupid and savage joy displayed in every look and every word, I scarcely knew whether I was among human beings or brutes. In vain did I look for one solitary individual, whose sadness of countenance indicated a soul that could weep at human degradation, and whom perhaps I should at the moment have clasped to my heart, and expressed the feelings which agitated my boosom. Ah! sacred God, all the pride of being a member of the human species vanished like a dream, and I felt nothing but shame and indignation. I left the scene to those who had hearts capable of enjoying it; I plunged into the depths of a grove,

and shed a torrent of tears over the callous and cruel disposition of man, and the cloud of prejudice in which the human species are enveloped.

It is a happy consideration oh! thou enlightened and universal friend of all that was born to feel, that I am addressing myself to thee, whose heart has ever beat in unison with my own, and from whom I received the first impressions of virtue I ever recollect to have felt. I would not for the world that this letter should be seen by the people of this country, not because it exhibits any trait of their character in an erroneous light, but because the limit of their sordid feelings could not comprehend it. Even thy genius soaring above all earthly prejudices, would not be able to bring them to a knowledge of their frailties, or exhibit a picture which could strike them with remorse. In vain is it to plead humanity to a tyrant. In vain is it to talk of sounds to the deaf, or colours to the blind.

I repeat that my soul feels an efflux of joy in imparting my feelings to thee who can recognize in them thy pupil, and they only flow

back to the source from whence they came. How fortunate is it, O bountiful Providence! that I was born in the distant empire of China, for upon no other part of the globe probably should I have ever met with so divine an instructor. How often have we ascended together the lofty mountains of Kamsi, where elevated above the surface of the earth, our souls seem equally elevated, and where amidst ancient spreading oaks and craggy rocks, we spent the day in celestial contemplation. How often have I there caught with enthusiasm the sublime flights of your Heaven born Genius, and at other times been melted by the tranquil but no less delicious tone of your sentiments. These, these were precious moments indeed. I dwelt upon their recollection with fond delight and lingering satisfaction. May the care of Heaven dwell around him to whom I am indebted for all I possess, and all I enjoy, and once more I bid you adieu.

LETTER XVIII.

I MENTIONED in a former letter the religious freedom that is enjoyed in this country. You may here witness, in one day the worship of the various religion of almost every other country. I lately took an excursion with my friend Appolonius, to indulge my curiosity in this way. My first adventure was at a Protestant church. This is the established church of England, and has more followers here than any other. I was much gratified in observing the various movements I saw, but as I had no knowledge of them myself, I took care only to do as I saw others do, and particularly my companion, who promised to be my guide on this occasion. The parson was elevated in a pulpit which overlooked his congregation, was dressed in black, and appeared very grave and solemn. With respect to the religious demeanour of the audience, without

approving or condemning in the mass, I will only observe, that there prevailed a great diversity of behaviour. Some seemed to be seriously impressed with the purpose of the meeting, and perfectly attentive to whatever the parson spoke or read, and others seemed to be wholly engaged in adjusting their dress, looking about for pretty faces or new fashions, or arresting the timid glances of persons of an opposite sex. When the parson prayed, some descended on their knees, which seemed both natural and devout, but others, afraid of fatigue or of soiling their dress, contented themselves with leaning on their arm, or of turning and looking out at the window. In the mere forms, however, they were pretty regular. They rose with one impulse, and sat down with one consent. When the parson rehearsed a psalm such I suppose as could sing gave their aid, and such as could not read it in their books. A great number, however, did not conform even to these rules, and several seemed so little interested in what was passing, that they could hardly keep from falling asleep. The duties of the parson were successively different. He sometimes uttered

a prayer, sometimes rehearsed a song, and sometimes read from his bible. These historical sketches were, it seems, of transactions which took place two thousand years ago among the Jews and Egyptians, and which might be true, but I could not tell in what respect they tended to make the present generation either wiser or better. Thou must naturally wish to hear some account of the religious lecture that was delivered, but this also turned on matters which I could not understand in any rational light, nor do I believe could the parson himself. The subject was the coming of Christ, his sufferings, and the means thence held out for the salvation of the world. These the preacher told us very gravely were mysteries, and I confess they were such to me; nor did his explanations tend, in any respect, to remove them, but rather involve them in still farther difficulty.

My next adventure was at a meeting of the society of Friends. This is the only religious sect I have ever heard of that have wholly discarded those superstitious ceremonies which, in every age and nation, seem to have been taken for religion itself....they appear even to

have gone on the other extreme, and to have discarded forms which seem natural and proper....they have no pulpit, no select preachers, no prayers....they meet together neither to hear nor to speak, but to reflect....they sit in an unchanging position, with their eyes fixed to the earth....they never rise to speak except when they conceive they are under the influence of a divine spirit, nor continue when this influence has subsided. Sometimes the men speak and sometimes the women : sometimes their discourse consists of a single sentence, and sometimes continues for half an hour, but they generally endeavour to express their ideas in as few words as possible. When their meeting is over, they shake hands with each other and depart.

The manners of this sect are very similar to their religious habits. They are friendly and familiar among each other, and their acquaintances; but not officious in their services to persons of a different religious denomination, or to strangers. Religious persecution is foreign to their disposition, and they equally reject it themselves, and despise it in others. They are the most methodical people in the

world, observe exact justice to all, and require the same from others; always proportion their expences to their income; are fond of conveniences, but little smitten with luxuries; regular and industrious in their own concerns, but seldom interfering in those of others. They are fond of gain and through their industry and economy, they are often very rich but for the same reason they are seldom ever poor, seldom involved in difficulties, and never found in a jail. Their dress is plain and uniform, and equally divested of ostentatious pride, and slovenly indecency. The character of these people upon the whole is good, but not without its defects. While they have rejected the ostentatious expences of the rest of the world, they have also rejected their innocent amusements, and while they have discarded their complimental ceremonies, they have also discarded their civilities. They take little part in the noisy scenes of politicks, or the flying political rumours of the day. They seem to live in a world of their own, and though they are friendly to one another, their carriage towards others has an unsociable, if not a selfish cast.

My next visit was to a church of the Catholick faith. Here I was struck with a thousand odd ceremonies. On the wall, in front of the congregation, is a representation of Christ expiring in tortures on a cross. Towards which the Bishop advances in a reverential manner, with a bucket of insence in his hand, continually swinging it backwards and forwards, while the rising vapours that fill the house, often occasion a disagreeable smell. Sometimes he advances towards the sepulchre, representing that of Christ, and opening the door where he is supposed to ascend; he raises his hands and eyes, in a posture of apparent adoration of the mercy of God. There are various ceremonies, which it is needless to relate. The dress of the minister is rather ostentatious than solemn, but the subject and manner of preaching is similar to that of the Protestant ministers. Their liturgy also appeared to be somewhat similar except that their prayers and psalms are sometimes written in Latin.

My next adventure was at a Methodist meeting. This sect maintains the necessity of a total change of nature in every successful

candidate for christianity, which they say cannot take place but through divine interposition, and a deep felt repentence for past sins. They blame the ministers of the high churches for being too lukewarm in the awful duty of the conversion of souls. Their conduct is consistent with these tenets. At the meeting I visited, several preachers succeeded, and each seemed to excel the preceeding in violence of manner and ardour of exhortation. The orator appeared sometimes almost exhausted by the violent exertion of his lungs and motion of his limbs, but drawing breath, and wiping the falling sweat away from his face, he ever began the attack with increasing ardour. The shortness of life, the necessity of repentence, the yawning grave, and the flames of Hell had an effect on the deluded hearers, which no rational eloquence could have produced. Groans, cries, clapping of hands, resounded from every part of the house. Some falling on the floor and imploring the forgiveness of God for their hedious and manifold crimes, and all was uproar and confusion. The preacher gratified and even transported with the sight, would involuntarily

leave the rostrum mix among the transported congregation, encourage their repentance, administer comfort, and return thanks to God for so plentiful a shower of grace. When matters were a little subsided, the experience of the repenting candidates for heaven, were heard by the preacher, when he expressed his hopes that they were worthy of the pardon of God, and exhorted them to persevere in the course they had begun. The meeting closed with prayers and several songs of praise to the diety in which all united their voice, in one lofty, loud, and rapturous swell, accompanied with a corresponding clapping of hands.

LETTER XIX.

I STATED in a former letter that the party called Federalists, and a large portion of the mercantile part of the community, looked forward to the next session of Congress, in hopes the embargo would then be repealed. This session has arrived, and is now nearly closed. At its commencement several propositions for repealing the embargo were offered by different members. The question gave rise to long discussion...every resource of invective and argument was exercised by both parties, and it was at last carried in the affirmative. In the early part of the session, this result was not expected, the proposition seemed however to gain ground, but even at last the issue of it excited some degree of astonishment. One thing might have had an influence, on the legislature in finally deciding on this subject, which did not operate at

the beginning of the session. A report began to circulate which was believed by some, and feared by others, that the people would not submit to the pressure of the embargo, and that if not repealed it would occasion a revolt of the eastern from the western states. This rumour was repeated on the floor of congress, as an alarming symptom of the discontent of the people, and no doubt had an influence on their proceeding. Another subject of embarrassment was, the difficulty, if not the impossibility of the putting the embargo law in complete operation. From the time it was passed to the time it was repealed, it was frequently violated, and when a proposition for applying a remedy to the evil was made in congress, it appeared to be attended with so many difficulties as to be almost insurmountable.

Though the embargo is raised there are still left many obstructions to commerce. Previous to its repeal an act was passed prohibiting all intercourse between the United States, and France, and Britain, or their dependancies. This law, generally speaking, is perhaps rather calculated to exclude foreign

merchandise, than to prevent the exportation of country produce, and afford to the United States the means of getting rid of their superfluities, but not of supplying their wants. Britain and some other countries, with whom this law prohibits an intercourse, are those from which the United States have been largely and regularly supplied with articles which they have not been in the habit of manufacturing, and of which they are now in want. A portion of that stock which was imported previous to the embargo still remains, a partial supply has been obtained since, by evading the embargo, and some feeble exertions have been made to establish domestick manufactures, but this has not prevented foreign merchandize from diminishing in quantity, and rising in price, and unless some unexpected change should take place, it will continue to be more and more the case. With respect to the means which the people have for exporting their own productions, the non-intercourse law has left countries, and islands enough for this purpose. Among these are a few countries on the continent of Europe, and the Spanish, Portugue, and some other

islands of the West Indies. Immediately after the embargo was raised, a great quantity of flour and other articles, were sent to these islands, and though a direct trade with those under the dominion of France and Britain is prohibited, it is probable they found means of supplying themselves from the same stock. With respect to the articles which have been shipped to the belligerent powers, as cotton, flax-seed, tobacco and some others, there must probably remain in the United States, a superfluity, unless they are obtained in those countries, in which they have been consumed through a circuitous channel.

In the present perplexed state of the national affairs of this country, the legislature are under great embarrassment to determine what course to pursue. To declare war would be precipitate, and to submit to their injuries would be degrading. Many propositions have been made, but none afford any remedy for the evil: much discussion has taken place but nothing has been done. After many inquiries, in which the wrongs and injuries of their country were constantly echoed, they have agreed to adjonrn until May. What

changes they then expect will have taken place, or what measures they then propose to adopt, I am at a loss to imagine. I am inclined to belive they will find themselves in the same predicament then, in which they are now.

A proposition was made during the present session to take off all restrictions on commerce, and allow the mercantile community to arm their vessels for defending their trade, but this proposition, like the rest, has been rejected. It was believed by some that the profits that accrued to the merchants, from their trade, would not justify the expence of these equipments, and the hazzard of defence, and that consequently the law would not be carried into complete execution; but admitting that it should, the consequences were dreaded. It was feared that the measure would shut the door to future negociation and ultimately involve a war, that from the use of this priviledge given to American merchant vessels, they would proceed to the abuse of it; and from acts of defence to acts of hostility; and that the United States would thus invite the hostility and de-

predations of her enemy on an element in which she was strong and herself weak.

Formerly this country appeared to think, that the fate of every other depended on her and were sustained by her productions, but now she begins to feel her dependence on them, and the want of their merchandize.—Formerly she thought that withholding from the belligerent nations her commerce, would soon compel them to render her justice, but now she finds that this measure operates less on her enemies than on herself, and dispairing to derive from it any benefit, has been glad to get rid of its evils. As her general situation is perplexed, so her relation with each of the belligerents is equally critical : to take any part in the cause of Britain would involve her in a war with France, and to take any part in the cause of France would involve her in a war with Britain. Discussions have been pending for several years with both of the belligerent nations, particularly Britain, sometimes on this side of the water and sometimes the other, but they have all ended in smoke, and matters remain in the same posture now that they did at the commencement of negociation. When-

ever a new minister or fresh instructions arrive either in Britain or America, a thousand reports of a new and happy change are immediately in circulation, but as soon as the correspondence is officially disclosed, the gloomy contrast between report and reality is perceived. To the first difficulties new ones have been added, and in the midst of negociation fresh subjects of negociation have arisen.

LETTER XX.

The equal distribution of property in this country, affords a very pleasing spectacle to a benevolent traveller. Extreme affluence and extreme poverty are in a great degree unknown. There exists neither haughty airs among one class, nor servile adulation among another. There are few dressed in rags, and still fewer in gold lace; and you have to encounter neither the imperious frowns of the lord, nor the doleful petitions of the beggar. But thou must not infer from these reflections, that all distinctions of rank are levelled to the ground.

When I speak of the equality of rank and possession, I view this country in a relative point of view with those of Europe, but when I descend into detail, I find a thousand exceptions to the position. In every age and every country, these distinctions not only exist, but stand high in the estimation of men; and the

country, where the contrary is supposed to take place, is the mere offspring of imagination. All mankind cannot be philosophers.... even in the philosopher there is often to be observed a striking contrast between his words and actions; and though he declaims against the insignificance of riches and rank in his closet, yet when he mixes in the world he shows he has the same partialities with the rest of his species. Perhaps by means of the very book in which he endeavours to show the emptiness of riches, and the harmlessness of poverty, he expects to obtain a share of the former, and relieve himself from the embarrassments of the latter.

When we hear a nation praising itself as the only one in the world where all distinctions are banished, except those of merit, we may mark it down as the empty vauntings of national egotism. Should we expect to find a country where the distinctions of property and rank are unknown, we must not look for it in any portion of the civilized world, but among nations immersed in barbarity. When I look around on this country, I find a thousand proofs of this position, and a thousand

contradictions of what the people affirm of themselves. Their national pride has led them to have their capital and president's house both large and splendid, when a much coarser one would have answered as well with half the expence. Indeed, in all those traits of pride and pomp, which are inseparable from civilization, I find little difference between this country and those of Europe. Thus, for instance, their actors on the stage are fond of mimicking great characters, however diminutive they may be themselves, and I am told sometimes quarrel for the preference in this particular. Their rich men driving by a poor man who pulls off his hat to them, may, it is true, give him a nod of their head, but it would give them little concern, should their horses besplatter the poor man over with mud. Gold or silver used in furniture or dress, is not admired so much for its beauty as for its cost, unless it can be said that its cost make it appear more beautiful. A wide distinction therefore must be made between the equality of political priviledges, and the inherent adoration which men are accustomed to pay to rank.

This country has made rapid advances in the more splendid arts of civilized life since the revolution, and particularly within a few years back. The stile of their equipage, furniture, and dress, is greatly improved, and many luxuries introduced which were formerly unknown. Where the productions of their own country, or the workmanship of their own ingenuity has not pleased, those of other countries have been sought for and obtained. Brick houses have taken place of wooden ones, mahogany tables are substituted for oak ones, silver spoons for pewter, China ware for English, and European broadcloth for homespun. Formerly the people valued their gardens principally for their vegetables; but now they begin to pay some attention to the arrangement of flowers, trees, and shrubs. Formerly the arts of architecture, sculpture, painting, and engraving, were almost unknown, or executed in a miserable stile; but now their artists in these branches begin to vie with those of Europe. The education of both male and female is greatly enlarged and improved, and the latter are better instructed now than the former were before the revolu-

tion. Reading, writing, and cyphering were once thought sufficient for them; but now they are instructed in drawing, musick, and several modern languages, as well as dancing, and their personal carriage. With these improvements of civilization, its attendant vices have also been introduced. The French dresses and manners have in a considerable degree been transplanted to this country. The dress and manners of the men are fopish and often ridiculous....those of the women alluring rather than captivating. It seems to be more congenial to their taste to attract the attention of all, than to secure the respect of a few, or the love of one. Empty compliments are exchanged in profusion, and devoured with avidity. If paint and wigs are not so common now as formerly, it is only because they happen not to be in fashion. Both coquets and fops are more numerous now than formerly.

One cursed effect of the progress for civilization is to envelope the heart of man in calous pride, to induce him to look up with reverence to the splendour of rank, and to pass by an unfortunate fellow creature borne down with years, shivering in cold, or pinched with

hunger, with a pitiless eye, and notwithstanding all the declamations of these people, about liberty and equality, and their regard for the cries of humanity, I do not find them exempt from this hateful trait. I do not find their words and actions to correspond. In every country of Europe through which I have successively passed, I have ever heard ready and plausible excuses for their contempt of the unfortunate poor. It is natural indeed for men to seek to hide their humanity; it is easy for them to talk in this way who cannot talk in any other; but to me even the weakness of humanity, the sigh of compassion, and the tear of sympathy, has ever been a welcome and a heart reviving sight. A poor unfortunate being (who has perhaps seen better days) comes to the door of a rich man and implores a shelter for the night, and a morsel of bread; but the proud man so far from relieving his distress, is ready to irritate it by insolence; so far from granting his humble petition, that with haughty frowns and imperious threats he drives him out to the mercy of the storm. When I see these things, can I longer pride myself in being a member of the human species? Oh no!

But to return from this digression. I before mentioned the progress which these people have, within a few years, made in the arts of civilization; but this position must only be taken within certain limitations. There is a great difference between the stile of building, the furniture, the dress, and the manners of the people of the city and the people of the country. In cities superior workmen are employed, and the latest improvements adopted; in the country their chief object is to engage workmen whose terms are cheap, and very often employ their own servants; and having little taste for elegance, and little knowledge of late improvements, they cannot adopt them. It is sufficient that their houses and their furniture are as good as those of their neighbours, without emulating the fashions of the city. The farmer spends the principal of his time in riding or walking over his plantation, consulting with his overseer and giving orders to his servants, but devotes a small portion of it to study, except it be to read his newspaper. To him any extraordinary phaenomenon of nature is a subject of neither wonder nor speculation. The matron looks over the culti-

vation of her garden, the cutting up of her meat, and the work of her kitchen, and sometimes gives an aid herself, but thinks little of parties, visits, or the fashions of the day. The whole family generally dress in homespun; and if they wear the dress of foreign manufacture it is only when they go to church, to a country dance, or visit a neighbour. The young ladies, so far from learning modern languages, few of them understand their own grammatically. They know nothing of the principles of musick; and though they will sing you a song, they can seldom perform on any instrument....they know something of drawing, and the elegance of needle work, but they acquire it from the instructions of their parents or their neighbour associates, and not from boarding schools. Persons of both sexes are more healthy, more blooming than those of cities; but they want that dignity of carriage, vivacity of expression, and that ease and grace of manner which distinguish the latter. When they are visited by persons from the town or the city, particularly if of some rank, they seem to feel it a great honour; and while they endeavour to appear to the best advantage and

receive their visitors in the best stile, they exhibit that diffidence, simplicity, and innocence which at once excites our love and our pity.

In the exterior parts of the country the arts of civilization prevail in a less degree. Those who remove thither do it from deliberate motives of gain....they are willing to give up elegance for profit; and to leave their friends and acquaintances provided by the removal, they can bequeath individually to their children a larger share of property. Here they have neither the workmen nor the materials to build in an elegant stile. Architecture is an art of which they know as little as they do of the structure of the Universe, or the order and motions of the solar system. In the hurry of their removal too they have not the time to build on an extensive plan or in an elegant stile. Profit and convenience dictate a coarse and common plan, and the example of those who are settled is not calculated to stimulate their ambition for any other. Generally the landed possessions of the inhabitants are immense; but the greater part is overrun with wilderness, and but a small portion cleared: the former yields plenty of game, the latter an

abundant crop, but exhibits little of the art of cultivation, or the improvements of fancy.—Their business is rather that of cutting down wildernesses and clearing up swamps, than of attending to the laborious niceties of cultivation, or the arrangement of flowers, trees, and shrubs. Very often the house is almost entirely surrounded with wood, and where you may hear through the gloom of night the fox, the owl, and the whipperwill. Towns are extremely dispersed, and in some parts entirely unknown....those which you may now and then meet with, are small, remote from commerce, and built in the coarsest stile.—This want of navigation and commerce is one great inconvenience of the exterior parts of the country, and one great obstacle to their settlement. In the present state of this country, the pursuits of agriculture and commerce are essentially connected; and neither can exist without the other. The richness and cheapness of land in many of the exterior parts are, indeed, alluring, but when those who would remove, take into consideration the want of commerce, there is scarcely sufficient inducement for them to change their situation. The

soil yields a rich crop; but the difficulty of getting it to market is great, and the price scanty and precarious. The people are, nevertheless, independent, and they are less liable to be affected by national vicissitudes than the people of the east. They raise abundance of the necessaries of life, and having little knowledge of its luxuries, they are content. The waring apparel which the more commercial parts of the country receive from Europe, those make for themselves....they are at once farmers and manufacturers, and equally masters of the plough and the shuttle. With respect to education, their mental powers lie dormant, and their curiosity has never been awakened to the charms of literature. Learning, among the higher class, is held in little estimation; and the information of the lower and middle classes is extremely rude and scanty. I have heard, if I mistake not, of a member of a legislature of one of the states, who, while he was sent to represent the district of his constituents, took the opportunity to learn those common rudiments of which his father failed to instruct him when young; and

instead of making laws, turned his attention to learning to read and write. This individual instance, however, is not to be taken as a general reflection.

LETTER XXI.

My friend Appolonius lately came to my lodgings; when I observed in his features an unusual expression of melancholy and discontent. I was surprised at this change, for he had always saluted me with a smiling countenance, and cheerful disposition; and immediately concluded that something had happened to him, that his fortune had suffered a wreck, or that some disaster had befallen his family or connections. I had already drawn my chair towards him without perceiving it; and with my eyes fixed in his countenance began to inquire what was the matter. "My concern" says he "is not for any thing that has happened to myself, but I feel for my beloved country. I have just come from the coffee house, and find, from the papers that all our friendly propositions to the belligerent powers of Europe have been rejected; gladly

would I hope for a favourable change, but alas! what have we to expect from nations who have long discarded all regard to justice, who actuated by an inextinguishable hatred of each other care not what injury they inflict on neutral nations, even though they should themselves suffer by it. Oh! what an age is it in which we live! The art of war is all that engages the attention of infatuated Europe, and he who can destroy most of his fellow men is looked upon as their greatest benefactor. The waters no longer unite nations in commerce, but are converted into a scene of mutual destruction. Armed vessels are substituted for merchant vessels; and cannon, powder, and bullets for those articles which were formerly exchanged for the mutual support and comfort of mankind. The United States has been the only assylum of peace and justice, and it seems that we are now to be involved in the convulsions of the rest of the world."

After hearing this oration I took the opportunity of stating an opinion on which I had at other times had some conversation with my companion. If such be the state of the world, I observed, would it not be better for your

country to renounce external commerce and encourage domestick manufactures: to depend on your own industry and resources, and not on that precarious intercourse with other nations which cannot be maintained without involving you in war or sacrificing important priviledges.

" Every thing" replied Appolonius " that can promote the general interest of my country is dear to my heart, but I confess I cannot agree with you in what you have stated. It may be specious in theory, but should it be put in execution it would occasion a stagnation of trade, and a distress of which we can, at this time, form but a faint conception. Agriculture and commerce have ever been the principal, and favourite pursuits of this country, and ever since the revolution they have been continually increasing. Every other branch is connected with them, and every national improvement has grown out of them. Our commercial towns have rapidly increased both in number and size, and our commercial shipping in an equal degree. Our farmers have co-operated in the same scheme; they have laid off their farms in such a manner as

the established system required, and cultivated such produce as the markets called for. Commerce is the main spring which has given motion to the machine. And should this spring be broken, what will be the consequence? There would be a stagnation of trade and general distress among the people. Our towns if they did not fall into ruins, would rapidly decline, and the value of the property be greatly reduced. Our merchants would see their business expire, while they had neither the skill nor the inclination to pursue another. Our farmers would be compelled to alter the plan of their inclosures, and at a loss what articles, or what quantity of each to cultivate. Our sailors, our ship carpenters, and many other classes of men, whose business depend on commerce, must be thrown out of employment, and in want of bread....As a friend to my country, I could never wish to see it reduced to this wretched situation.

I am inclined to believe, replied I, that thou hast greatly exaggerated those evils from attributing too many advantages to commerce. Agriculture, and not commerce is the real source of the wealth of a nation; and

the former can flourish without the latter, but the latter cannot flourish without the former. A nation possessed of an extensive and fertile country, may combine her other pursuits as circumstances may render necessary, and still live independently and happily. Should this country submit to this happy revolution, the people would not be thrown out of employment, but would only, in some respects, have to change their business. As one pursuit was abolished, another would take place; and those who were thrown out of employment in the former, would find employment in the latter. Domestick manufactures would arise in place of those which supplied you from Europe; and before the stock imported from the latter was exhausted, you would be abundantly supplied from the former. Your farmers would cultivate the same ground with the same utensils, but they would rear less of that produce which has heretofore been exported, and more of those articles which would be wanting for internal manufactures. Your merchants might be induced to renounce their former pursuits, but so far from being at a loss for objects to

employ their capital, there would even be a field open for enterprize. This class of the community, who formerly had their property plundered on the ocean by the enemies of their country, would now see their capital vested in manufactories, under their immediate inspection, and equally advantageous to themselves and their country. With respect to persons who might want employment, I cannot but think that they might generally meet with it in some line or other, and those who should not be qualified for one pursuit, might be qualified for another. Thus the revolution would be gradual and not violent, and though former pursuits would be abolished and new ones introduced, it would be difficult to tell where the one ended or the other began. The machine of your national affairs might suffer a temporary derangement, but it would soon recover its harmony and regularity of motion.

"To view an undertaking in theory," replied my companion, "and to encounter it in practice, often prove to be extremely different; and while the inventive fancy readily supplies every defect in the one case, we are overwhelmed in difficulty and disappointment

in the other. The most ingenious are often in this respect like the fabulous account of the person who imagined he could make wings by which he could soar above the earth; and when he had finished his task, he ascended to a height where he took his leap, but instead of his imaginary flight, soon found himself overwhelmed in the waters of a lake that lay beneath him. Our country has heretofore been engaged in certain pursuits on an extensive plan. The majority of those engaged in them, have in the early part of their lives served a regular apprenticeship to their respective callings, to gain a competent knowledge of them, and all have been compelled to devote to them a certain degree of time and attention. What is to become of these numerous citizens, the benefit of whose labour the country once enjoyed, but who are now to be thrown out of employment, to pine in want and distress? Are those different species of manufactures which must be introduced, branches which every one can pursue, or which are to be learned in an instant? Far from it. They are equally slavish and difficult; and for persons either to endure them or pursue

them with success, it is necessary to have been bread to them almost from their infancy. Thus a considerable portion of the union must want employment; while the country generally would be in want of those necessary articles with which commerce has supplied us. The rearing of manufactories has in every country been the progressive work of ages; and it is impossible they can be established in sufficient number and perfection to supply the immense wants of a country where they were previously unknown, and foreign to its leading pursuits."

"You would not," replied I, "have to pass through the tedious progressive improvements of Europe in these arts; but they would in their present state of perfection, be at once transplanted to this country. Many of your ingenious countrymen, who have been in Europe, would take models of what they had seen, and when they returned home would put them in execution. English books on these subjects would be published, and receive the attention of the community. Many of the persons bred to these arts in Europe, would be induced to come to this country. When the

ustom of the United States was withdrawn
rom European manufactories, they would in a
onsiderable degree languish. Many persons
vould be thrown out of employment....and
vhile they would be compelled from neces-
ity to look out for some other, common sense
vould dictate their removal to the United
States. But exclusive of any foreign aid,
hy country has already considerable know-
edge of those arts. Since the obstruc-
ions to her commerce have taken place,
several manufactures have been established,
nd in operation; and they are increasing in
very part of the union. I have myself seen
ome of the cloth wrought in them, and
vhile it is just as good as those of Europe is,
I am told, sold cheaper with a better profit.
With respect to that distress which thou say-
st will take place among certain classes for
want of employment, I can only observe that
for the reasons before stated, I am inclined to
believe that it will be less, and continue a
shorter time than supposed, and these reasons
it is unnecessary to repeat. But admitting
these difficulties should take place, are not
the difficulties to your commerce equally great.

Is not your property plundered? Are not your seamen impressed? In short is not your external trade either entirely cut off or reduced to a scanty remnant? Have not these things long been severely felt? And why did not the people at once turn their attention to domestick manufactures?"

"But would there not," replied Appolonius, "be more national honour in defending that commerce to which we have a right, and which cannot be relinquished without producing the greatest distress and inconvenience; than thus ignobly to give it up because a foreign nation frowns on us? Should our external trade be annihilated, it is not only cotton and woollen manufactures which we should have to establish, and which at this time seem alone to occupy the consideration of the publick; but a thousand others of which we have formed no conception. Can those various productions brought from so many different climes, be reared in the soil and climate of the United States? Can those numerous manufactured articles, collected from the ingenuity of every nation, be wrought in the United States? Is our country at this time prepared to engage in

hese numerous pursuits; and does not the very idea of their magnitude and difficulty overwhelm us in dispair? For the production of some of these articles we have not the materials; for others we have not the workmen; and for some we have neither materials nor workmen."

Many of those articles replied I, are mere luxuries; the importation of which has only served to exhaust the substantial wealth of thy country; and their exclusion so far from being an injury, would be a real blessing. Your country could do without them; the greater portion of it already does without them, and though their exclusion might extort something from the pride of the rich, it would extort little from their real wants. But with respect to the real necessaries of life, your country can and does manufacture the principal of them. Some of these pursuits would be improved, others would be conducted on a larger scale, and new ones would be invented and encouraged; but the enterprising spirit and diversified skill of thy country would be competent to the whole. With respect to all necessary *materials*, I am persuaded that a

country so extensive, and embracing such a variety of soil and climate, must be adapted to the most of them, and if they are not already produced, they certainly would when the enterprize of the people was awakened, and these articles in demand. There is certainly treasures of discovery and improvement reserved for thy country, of which it has at this time no conception, and many of which has only escaped its attention, because it has been wholly engrossed by other objects.

The burthen of this important revolution would be greatly diminished by the exclusion of useless luxuries. Articles of general and necessary use, would first engross the attention of the publick; luxuries, if they were introduced, would be the result of progressive improvement, but it would be far better for thy country could they be forever excluded.

"These are sentiments" replied my companion "which may do honour to a philosopher, but it is extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to induce a whole nation to submit to the dictates of philosophy, and renounce their old habits. This is an effect which can seldom be produced on an individual, and

though he may receive a transitory impression, he soon returns to his former customs; but when we would expect it from a nation, the difficulties are equally numerous and insurmountable. In a state of civilized society, it is in fact extremely difficult to separate necessaries from luxuries, and men do not judge from the value of the articles themselves, but from being more or less accustomed to them. The artificial wants of man, are as strong as his real ones; and his pride is always stronger than his philosophy."

These objections, replied I, would have their due weight if your commerce had no interruption, but when we consider the numerous obstructions to it, may not your country be induced to do from necessity, what they would not from choice? But throwing aside necessity, is thy country wholly destitute of patriotism? Her history forbids me to entertain this opinion. Consider how many difficulties, and hardships she endured through a tedious, and doubtful war, to gain her independence; and will she not now endure the same to preserve it, and to establish her interest on a solid and lasting foundation,

beyond the power of foreign nations to effect.

" It is often less difficult" replies my companion, " to encounter an enemy, than to conquer our own passions and habits. In the one case our energies are roused by the hostile attitude of our enemy ; in the other they in a great measure lie dormant, or there is a conflict between our good and bad propensities, while the former too often yield to the latter. In the one case we are often more resolute in a bad cause than in the other we are in a good one. There are many who would face the mouth of a cannon, who cannot resist their own weakness, and Alexander who conquered the world, was himself conquered by the love and wine..... But there is one consideration which seems to have escaped our notice, and which may serve to illustrate what I have advanced. Should this projected revolution take place, by what agency, or what means, is it to be effected? It must either be produced by a law of congress, or the voluntary consent of the people ; and in neither way can it be effected. Congress has the power to regulate,

but not to annihilate commerce; and if it had the power, the people would never submit to the exercise of it. The embargo (though an act essentially different from an annihilation of commerce) has fully exemplified this fact. Though it was a measure which the difficulty of the crisis required; though it was less a measure of retaliation upon our enemies, than one for preserving the property of citizens; yet it in no long time raised an alarming discontent. It was even affirmed, though erroneously, that if it was not repealed, it would occasion a revolt of the eastern from the western states; and notwithstanding its many provisions, and severe penalties, it was frequently violated while it continued. All these circumstances at length compelled congress to repeal it."

I have only to make one remark, replied I, in answer to your observations. I believe we have all along differed more respecting the manner in which the projected revolution is to be affected, than respecting the benefits which must inevitably result from it. It is true it may not be produced either by a law of congress, or by the voluntary consent of the people; but then it may be produced by the

difficulties of the crisis. It is this which has already turned the attention of thy country to domestick manufactures; and there is reason to believe they will still continue in progressive improvement. On the subject of commerce I will make but one remark. Whatever doubts may exist as to the wisdom of its total annihilation, I am decidedly of opinion that it would be much better for thy country to conduct it on a much smaller scale, to exclude useless luxuries and import only such articles as are necessary, or which she cannot produce herself; to cut off those unwieldy branches which only exhaust the sap of the tree, and retain those only which bear fruit. A country whose commerce, like that of the United States, is so immense, and branched out in so many different directions, without a navy to protect it, is at the mercy of every country, and whatever may be her national justice, she is liable to be involved in wars and plundered by every piratical power. Should the commerce of such a country be entirely cut off, her situation is truly wretched, and she is left with a thousand artificial wants without the means of supplying even such as are real. When we

consider the rapacity and injustice which has always prevailed in the political world, we may take it for an indubitable maxim, that the more a nation can live by her own economy and industry, the more she has her resources within her own controul, the better.

Here our conversation ended, and my friend declared, that in these maxims he entirely concurred. Adieu.

LETTER XXII.

I SOMETIMES take a ramble by myself, stop successively at different publick places, and find some degree of pleasure in noting the various characters that resort to them, and listening to their motly conversation, without being known. Sometimes I sit in a solitary corner wrapped in my cloak, and have nothing to amuse me but the passing scenes; and sometimes I come in contact with a social fellow whom I am compelled to join in puffing a segar or drinking a mug of ale. Sometimes I am taken for a foreigner, and sometimes for a citizen, sometimes for a democrat and sometimes for a federalist. I never drop any hint of my real character further than what may be discovered from my physiognomy, or the peculiarity of my pronunciation. These excursions afford little amusement to a citizen, but to a traveller like myself, whose curiosity

is awakened by every thing he sees, they are highly gratifying, and furnish many hints of speculation. The companies in which I find myself, are sometimes grave, sometimes serious, and sometimes a mixture of all descriptions.

In the first house at which I stopt was a crouded company, who were eagerly disputing on politicks. They were divided into several parties, and the fumes of tobacco, the stimulous of wine, and the warmth of the fire had raised the spirit of their conversation to the highest tone. Each, I observed, was restless while the other was speaking, one half of whose remarks he did not listen to, while the other half appeared in a light wholly distorted. Frequently one would interrupt the other in the midst of his observations, and if the latter still persisted, the other would involuntarily address his spontaneous effusions to the rest of the company, or would cast around him a look of contemptuous astonishment, at what he was compelled to listen to.—Frequently the argument turned upon the point who had a right to speak, and when one had fully proved his claim as he imagined, and

just entered on his explanation, the other would cut him short, with " that I have already answered," or " that is incorrect," or " you are wandering from the point." A little sturdy fellow being seized with the prevailing fit, and desirous of expressing some new idea which I suppose had occurred to him, left his glass, rose from his seat, and threw down his segar, but after a thousand stuttering efforts to obtain a hearing, first jogging the shoulder of one, and then another, was at last compelled to renounce the attempt, and resume his seat in all the irritation of disappointment. Another with a glass of grog in his hand, was equally impatient, but unfortunately having applied it to his lips, when his opportunity was at hand, it was to his great mortification seized from him by another before he could recover the use of his lungs. Frequently the whole company united in one clamour, and while each was striving to attract the attention of the rest, there was not a solitary listner in the room. Some laboured under a confusion of ideas ; others under impediments of expression ; some burst out in a horse laugh, and others exhibited every mark of

irritation. But the most amusing circumstance was the facility with which they wandered from the point. There was a hundred topicks disputed, and not one discussed. It was a contest of passion in which reason had no share, and they endured all the thorns of controversy without any of the fruits. The scene might be compared to a fire which suffocates the company with smoke without imparting one ray of heat.

My curiosity being gratified here, I proceeded to another place of the same description. Here I observed in one room a number seated around a card table, on which were staked several parcels of money, for which their avarice was excited. A number of idle fellows were crouded around the gamblers, and eagerly looking over to see the result. There were several much intoxicated, who seemed to be most implicated in betting, and throwing down their money with a brutal curse, were perfectly indifferent about the fate of it. The minds of the company generally seemed to be wholly fixed on the game, and nothing was to be heard, except at intervals an oath or exclamation of regret for a loss sustained, or the

blustering jargon of the drunkards....At last a dispute arose between two of the gamblers on some incident of the game. They appealed to the bye standers, but some had not observed, and some gave their opinion in favour of one party and some in favour of the other. From argument they proceeded to dogmatick assertions, from thence to harsh insinuations, and from thence to blows. In the turbulence of the engagement they upset the gambling table, scattered the cards, and mixed together the money which lay on it. This occasioned a most dreadful confusion, for each party striving to obtain what he imagined his own, and some wishing to profit from the confusion, they began to wrangle and fight in every direction about the division....some came off with bloody noses, others with bloodshot eyes, some were woolled by the hair, and others stamped under foot, and several were glad to make their escape.

In another room was a set of a different description, who, though indulging in all the excess of dissipation, still preserved the hilarity of friendship and good nature. They had met together with the determination of having

a frolick. The glass circulated freely, jokes were cracked, and bursts of laughter followed. Songs passed round, and were roared in an unmerciful strain. When at a late hour they attempted to rise from the table, few had the use of their limbs. Some staggered against the wall, others fell against the table, and others got entangled in their chair, and fell prostrate on the floor. The wine was spilt on the table, the glasses were scattered about, several crushed to pieces on the floor, and the chairs upset. Having now replenished their glasses, which they drank standing up, they began to break them to pieces one against the other. Several being seized with the contagion, and desirous to keep up the fun, took up the bottles lying on the table and threw them against the wall, and all were highly delighted with the flying pieces of glass and the wine flowing down the floor. They now with, one impulse, seized the table which obstructed their movements, and having thrown it on one side, they formed themselves in a ring, and began to roar out a song in which all united, accompanied with stamping, huzzaing, and bursts of laughter. The landlord wishing

to preserve some decorum in his house, came in to expostulate, but they swore they would pay for all damages and wanted no advisers. The servant came in to endeavour to set the furniture in some order, but he only afforded a new object of fun for the turbulent Bacchanalians, and seizing him, some by one limb and some by another, and others setting fire to his hair, he was glad to make his escape, while the flame issued from his head. Wishing now to take a farewell drink, they loudly demanded a fresh bottle, but it was with great difficulty that the affrighted servants could be mustered, and not until long and impatient clamour that they obtained it. Having filled their glasses, and mingling with the draught the sentiment that they might never all meet together again, they swallowed it with all imaginable relish. They now broke up their meeting and dispersed. I observed that stupefaction soon took place of hilarity; some fell asleep in their chairs, others began to vomit, and others were carried to bed by the servants. Such as had homes endeavoured to seek them, and those who were less intoxicated undertook to assist the others. I attended them to the

door. Some, in trying to sound the steps, missed their footing and fell on the pavement: others got entangled in the streets and fell in the mire, and all moved along with tottering steps, and in a circuitous direction.

Returning to my lodgings, I began to reflect on what I had seen. It is at such places, said I, that human nature is seen in its most degraded light: it is there that habits are contracted, which lead to immediate ruin and disgrace. How many fortunes, at such places are, in a few months, nay a few nights, dissipated! How many healthy constitutions are reduced to a wreck? Unfortunate is the poor woman who has a husband of such a character! How often, through him, is she reduced to the extreme of wretchedness? Her children, instead of being supported by the industry of the father are, by his prodigality, reduced to poverty and want; instead of being instructed by the example of his virtues, are contaminated by the example of his vices. While he is squandering his money at taverns, it is perhaps through the exertions of the mother that her children are maintained, perhaps after all her efforts she sees them looking up to her in

vain for bread. But the most affecting circumstance is, that to her other miseries are very often added the tyranny of an intoxicated husband. How many a poor woman is thus brought to an untimely grave, and dies of a broken heart?

In the midst of these melancholy reflections, I cast my eyes up and found myself near an inn of a more genteel description than those I had visited. I entered it. In a room at some distance from transient customers, I observed several persons of a serious aspect, who were engaged in conversation. I approached them, and found that the subject was religion. One of the company addressed himself somewhat in the following strain. "I do not believe there is any religion in the world that had its origin from God. They all attribute to him human passions, and even human weakness, and sometimes represent him in a detestable, and sometimes a ridiculous point of view; nor does the christian religion afford any exception. The universe is the best evidence of the wisdom of God, and our own reason and conscience, the best rule of our moral conduct. There are many parts of

the scripture which prove that the authors of it were not only men, but that they had very contracted ideas of the grandeur of the creation; and there are many parts of it which contradict the first axioms of the human understanding. Absurdities, which have been shielded under the name of mysteries, abound through the whole, and there are many parts which contradict each other. It is from this obscurity and contradiction of the bible, that there have arisen so many different sects, each drawing their creed from different texts, and while they have preached humanity to the rest of the world, have set the example of intolerance, and persecution among each other." This severe invective highly incensed the christians, who had always been accustomed to look upon their religion as sacred, yet such was their embarrassment, that they could make no reply. An old man, however, apparently far advanced in years, made the following answer. "The manner in which you have spoken of christianity, is only a proof that you have never experienced that divine consolation and support which it is calculated to afford, and does afford to every person who reads it

with a pious mind, and your situation is rather worthy of pity than of envy. The universe may indeed display the wisdom, and power of God, but it leaves us in darkness, and doubt, on many other important points, of which the heart of man naturally sighs to be informed. As beings, feeling our dependence on an overruling creator, endowed with the principles of action, susceptible of joy and hope, and capable of looking forward to the next world, as well as the present; we anxiously desire a more intimate acquaintance with our creator, and embrace with joy and gratitude, the system in which those treasures are revealed. And why should not the Almighty have condescended to gratify this desire of his creatures? Or what system bears more striking proofs of divine origin than christianity, a system which breathes the most divine benevolence, and some of whose maxims are almost too celestial for man in his natural, and corrupt state to admit? It is this which imparts a satisfaction to the pious, which hey would not give up for all the wealth and power of the world, and which gloomy scepticks would themselves envy, were they

capable of feeling it. It is this which in some instances has changed even the very nature of man, which always engages the affection, and strengthens the virtuous exertions, which under every misfortune cherishes the consoling belief that we are in the hands of an all-wise creator, and amidst all the emptiness of this transient life, reminds us of that whose duration is eternal, and whose happiness is without alloy. If deists are incapable of feeling this divine satisfaction, why do they endeavour to take it from others, and diffuse in place of it their gloomy doubts? Why spread the contagion among those who have not the disease."—These remarks which the pious old man delivered in a feeling and artless manner had a very visible effect on the young Deists. He sighed, cast a look to the earth, and me thought his countenance seemed to say, "I may have truth on my side, but the Christian surely has happiness on his." Indeed my friend this is not the only proof which I have witnessed of the consolation which Christians both in this country and others derive from their religion. It has been the opinion of some philosophers, that every religion which

is founded on morality, and points to a future and more happy state is a blessing to society. Those on the contrary who have discarded all systems of religion, have exhibited sufficient proofs of the weakness of that philosophy which they would substitute, and passing from one gloomy chimera to another, have at last ended with denying the existence of a universe, the existence of a God, and the existence of themselves.

LETTER XXIII.

A QUESTION which has here given rise to much discussion is, whether it is expedient to appropriate a sum for building a navy, and whether it would afford a better defence than fortifications and gun boats. My companion, Appolonius, though he is an advocate for commerce, does not seem to approve of this measure, we have just had a conversation on this subject, and I have only taken up my pen to relate the substance of it. Why said I, addressing him, has thy country declined the honour of building and supporting a navy which would afford protection to your commerce and command the respect of other countries. Your policy is in this respect, it seems, different from that of the nations of Europe who think it as necessary to be powerful at sea as to be powerful on land. Nevertheless you have in your possession every means

of becoming their rival in this branch of national strength. The immense forests of thy country afford abundance of materials for building a navy and her commerce carried on with every part of the world yield plenty of sailors to man it.

"'Tis true" answered Appolonius "that we have all the means of raising a navy but we do not in this respect chuse to enter the list of ambition with Europe. The gigantic navy of Britain is no better than a necessary evil and like those painful operations which the human body is sometimes compelled to endure in order to preserve a remnant of existence. Separated as we are from the commotion of Europe and living under a government whose object is the happiness of the people our manner of thinking is, in many respects different from that of Europe: we turn with abhorrence from war and ambition and embrace the blessings of peace and justice. Had we a navy it might only inspire us with an ambition for maratime dominion and involve us in injurious and unnecessary wars."

That a navy, replied I, may be prostrated to dishonourable purposes like every other engine

of national power I readily acknowledge, but surely the views of thy country in building one would not be to invade the rights of other nations but to defend her own. You seem to think that her remote situation from Europe and her pacifick policy shield her from national injuries but you forget that she is connected in commerce with almost every other country, and that whatever may be her national justice other countries are not governed by the same principle. The difficulties in which she is at this time placed is a proof of this remark.

"And what service (replied Appolonius) would a navy be to us in our present situation? Could such a one as we could build, cope with that of Britain or be able to defend our commerce in all its branches? All that we can do is to prepare ourselves for defending our sea port towns and these preparations we have began long ago. Congress has wisely preferred fortifications and gun boats to frigates. Gun boats for defending our shores possess several advantages over frigates. They are more easily managed in narrow rivers and shoal water, and depend less on the vicissitudes of winds."

On this point, replied I, the nation is divided

in opinion, and my scanty knowledge of maritime affairs does not enable me to hazzard a conjecture on the subject. Whether frigates or gun boats however are best calculated for the defence of your shores at this crisis it is certain that the former are of more permanent and general use. Gun boats may be calculated for the shore, but frigates are calculated for the ocean. Gun boats have only been built for defending your towns against the attacks of one of the belligerent nations which may not take place, but frigates would not only be calculated for the same purpose but would be permanent and respectable engines of national strength and useful in many future cases in which they may be wanting. Your commerce, branched out in so many different channels, is subject to depredations, sometimes by one country and sometimes by another, nor is it possible to protect it without a navy. Tis true that such a one as it might be practicable for you to build, would be inferior to that of Britain but it might be superior to that of many other countries, and though it might not be able to accomplish every thing it might be extremely useful.

"Whatever should be our motives," replied my companion, "for building a navy, it would occasion a great national expence, and perhaps be destined at last to fall into the hands of Britain. The navy of Holland, France, Spain, and Denmark, have shared this fate. Britain actuated by nothing but ambition and self interest could not view a growing navy of the United States without an effort to suppress it. Our rights on the ocean have, besides, always clashed with hers, which would peculiarly expose us to a naval contest with her. Our seamen have been impressed, our property has been plundered, and our citizens murdered within our own waters. To build a navy sufficient to prevent a repetition of these insults, is out of our power, and the expence of the measure would be inconsistent with the economy of our country."

This was the end of our conversation. It unfolds some of the peculiar circumstances under which this country is placed. Adieu.

LETTER XXIV.

THE Anniversary of the Independence of this republick, has lately been celebrated, and a short sketch of it may perhaps afford thee some amusement. This is the day on which the colonies in congress assembled, declared themselves independent states, and afterwards realized it by their exertions. The people in the full enjoyment of their liberty, still look back with pleasure to that period under the difficulties of which their fathers had the resolution to take so bold a stand, and the fortitude to maintain it; a period when the conflict was arduous, and the result uncertain. Accordingly the return of this day is celebrated with every demonstration of joy. The shops are shut up, every one is exempt from labour, and business, and appears in his best apparel. The militia, and volunteer companies make a grand parade, houses of

business deserted, and publick inns crowded. An oration is generally delivered on the occasion, and every one thinks it his duty to get drunk.

I confess, indeed, that the proceedings of these people appeared to me more ludicrous than rational. They hail the return of this day less on account of the political blessings that may be associated with it, than on account of the opportunity it affords of gratifying their own respective propensities. The laborious, or the idle hail it not as a day of national, but personal liberty. The voluptuous hail it for the opportunity it affords of gratifying their intemperate appetites under the cover of displaying their patriotism; and all hail it more for the pomp of the celebration, than the purpose of it.

The morning dawned with firing of cannon, and a band of musick parading the street accompanied with a host of noisy boys. As the morning passed on, and the period for mustering approaches, individuals of every condition, size and phisiognomy, are seen in their different military dresses, repairing to appointed places of meeting; their muskets on their

shoulder, and their cartouch box laced to their side. Having met together, and formed into different companies, each under their respective commander, they march in one body through the main street, preceeded by a band of musick, and ensigns floating in the air. The commanders on horseback assume great pomp and importance, sometimes spurring their horses forward, sometimes stopping short and retreating back, now pointing their swords, and now giving orders. Every heart is elated with joy, and every eye attracted by the sight. The women crowd to the windows; the boys collect in groups; the servants let go their wheel-barrows, or lay down their burdens, and look on with gaping curiosity. The foot passages next to the houses are crowded with spectators who advance with the march of the soldiers, and transient passengers find it impossible to get through hem. The street is so completely stopped up that no other engine can pass. Here a carriage is compelled to stop to give room for the passage of the soldiery, there a horse breaks from his bridle and escapes through the crowd, and another too ungovernable for his rider, runs

against the side of a house or tree and the horseman narrowly escapes being thrown. The band of musick and the solemnity of the procession attract every eye until the last company of soldiers disappear and the scene to those who remain in town is closed. The women unwillingly let down their windows, labourers with reluctance return to their work, and the valetudinarian with a sigh returns to his sick room.

The soldiers are now on their march to the place of parade, accompanied by a number of spectators on horseback. Having arrived, they undergo the various evolutions of military discipline. When service is over, the commander sometimes makes a speech to his men, always replete with national egotism. He tells them that this is the glorious day on which their heroick fathers resolved to be free and sealed the resolution with their blood, that it is worthy the descendents of such heroes, not only to hail its return with every demonstration of joy to the end of time, but to shew in every trait of their national conduct that they will ever defend their liberty with the same valour by which their fathers gained it,

and that clinging to it as a blessing inseparable from their existence, both must be crushed under the same blow. He reminds them that the difficulties of the crisis require the exertion of all their patriotism; that they know not how soon the unprincipled aggressions, or hostile invasions, of their enemy may call them to the field, when hearkening to the voice of the guardian angel of their country, they will cheerfully leave their fire-sides and the happiness of domestick scenes, to encounter the inclemencies of weather, the toil of marches, and the danger of battle. He concludes with observing, it is a gratifying consideration that the demonstration of the patriotism and unity of their country is calculated to inspire their enemies with respect, if not with dread, and to convince them that a body of enlightened freemen are not to be resisted by the harrassed slaves of a tyrant. Such, on this and other occasions is the common strain of their national vanity.

On this anniversary, they have sometimes adopted a manœuvre which is perfectly consistent with their national pomp, and this is a sham battle. The companies are divided into

two parties, and pass through all the forms of battle, but none of the danger, make use of powder but not lead, and gratify their vanity without bringing their courage to the test. They load and fire, advance and retreat, and after desperate exertions on both sides one party is at last compelled to surrender.

Leaving the field of muster, they repair to the different places where dinner is prepared for them....some to inns in the city, some to gardens in the suburbs, and some to a spring overshaded with trees. In these places are made temporary arrangements of planks, answering the purpose of a table, and extended far enough to admit of seats for a number of persons. Here the sons of freedom think they display their patriotism by indulging in every excess of natural and artificial appetite, and that they render a tribute to their political constitution by infusing poison into their natural ones. To view their intemperate indulgencies, you would hardly suppose that they were the descendants of that hardy band who endured so many difficulties and privations during the revolution. It is customary for every one before he swallows his draught to

give a toast, full of the pomp of words, but destitute of truth, and by which the power and virtue of his own country is exaggerated and that of every other depreciated. This is followed by several loud and stupid shouts. When the festival is broke up few are able to walk without staggering, or to talk without mumbling their words. The more temperate part endeavour to find their way home ; and of the rest some get among drinking clubs, others among gambling parties ; some go to seraglios, and some patrole the streets, with their bottle in their hand, making every species of noise, and sometimes pulling down signs, making traps at doors, or upsetting steps.

LETTER XXV.

Thou wilt discover, from several of my letters, the unbounded civil freedom which is enjoyed in this country, and that the highest officers of government are subject, not only to the investigation, but to the abuse of the lowest order of citizens. This priviledge of the people is particularly exercised at every period of national difficulty, and besides the usual newspaper effusions, there are abundance of pamphlets, each professing to hold out a sovereign remedy for the evil, and only requiring a fair examination to convince every one of the same.

There are many characters who derive all their importance from some weakness of their species. The king derives his from their reverence of empty rank and title. The shew-man or fortune teller derives his from their credulity. The political demagogue derives his from the

frenzy of their party feelings; and the political scribbler derives his from the avidity with which men read every ephemerical publication on subjects which agitate their feelings, while the finest productions on other topicks are read with indifference, or passed over with neglect.

Eclitus has all the vanity of an author, with hardly the information of a school boy. He has, nevertheless, had the gratification to see a few of his pieces inserted, with some grammatical corrections, in several periodical productions. This excited his vanity to such a degree, that he resolved to write a book which would not only display his powers to the present generation, but extend his fame to the latest posterity. He accordingly made several exertions, but in each miscarried. Some of his productions he could not prevail upon any bookseller to publish, others were printed but were neglected by the publick. His friends censured his vanity, and those few of the people who read his book rendered it more ridiculous by their criticism than it really was. Eclitus could not, however, be persuaded to renounce his pursuit, and upon reflection is

resolved to chuse a political subject for his next performance. Viewing the interest which his country felt on this subject, in all its branches, to the total exclusion of almost every other, he was convinced that a political production could not fail to attract their attention. He accordingly resolved to write a pamphlet on the crisis....he begins it with enumerating the difficulties in which the nation is placed, not only to shew the necessity of an investigation on the subject, but to convince you of his superior powers, in being able to overcome them all, and to point out that sovereign remedy which had escaped the sagacity of the national cabinet. In his progress he examines successively every opinion in opposition to the position he means to lay down, and of course refutes them. He now comes to his grand political panaeea, the expectation of his readers are raised to the utmost ; but, alas, it is found to be no more than some stale idea which has been reiterated a thousand times both in publick prints and private conversation ; or some political opinion into which his party creed has led him. After proving, incontestably, the utility of his position, and

defending it against all cavil, he ends with remarking, that he has gone through his investigation solely from the motive to discharge his duty to the publick, that though it may have cost him some hours study over the midnight oil, he will be sufficiently compensated should the publick have the prudence to follow his advice, but that should what he has written be neglected at the present day, posterity at least will do it justice.

Culfstock has always been a noisy politician, and a violent enemy of the administration. He is the author of many scurrilous pieces, which has appeared in the newspapers. At publick elections his haughty carriage, and dogmatick assertions are very apt to involve him in quarrels, with those who do not think as he does. He goes to coffee houses on purpose to indulge his ungovernable propensity for abusing all publick officers. On publick festivals the toasts he gives always point to the weakness and wickedness of the administration. Politicks he introduces in every company, and on every occasion. He is not destitute of talents, but they are wholly perverted by illiberal prejudices. On the

subject of politicks, you can neither derive information from him, nor will he receive it from you. When you speak, he is impatient until you are done, and hears not a word you uttered, but when he addresses you, though in a dogmatick and blustering stile, he expects you will look up to him with as much reverence as if a pure intelligence were addressing you. His behaviour often offends strangers, and is disgusting to his most intimate acquaintances.

After long indulging his invectives against publick characters in every company, and conversation, he resolves to commit his ideas fully to paper, and publish them in a pamphlet. He thinks it impossible, but such an investigation must convince every candid mind of the truth of his opinions. He begins with observing that the demagogue rulers have long imposed on the credulity of the nation, but he is determined to strip them of the mask, to expose their weak and wicked policy, and arouse the people from their dream. He observes that the consequences of the election of the present members of the cabinet, were long ago foretold by his own

party, and are now realized. Wholly governed by party passions, he goes on to view only one side of the question, and to exhibit every thing in a distorted shape. The difficulties of the crisis he confounds with defects of national policy. Where rulers have made exertions to obtain peace, he construes it into a pusillanimous submission to insults, and where they have made preparations for defence, he construes it into a wish to involve the country in a war. His blunders he mistakes for his discoveries; his own prejudices for that of the adverse party, and his total ignorance of his own frailties, for a full demonstration of the ignorance, the folly, and stupidity of the national cabinet. His intemperance carries him still farther, and he relates every pitiful story, whether true or false, whether from good or bad authority, that can injure the moral character of publick men, or give a plausible colour to his invectives. He concludes with a solemn appeal to the nation, intreats them to reflct fairly and impartially, on the contents of his pamphlet, to exercise the priviledges of freemen, and no longer submit to the delusions of prejudice; to cast

out from office men who have thrown a disgrace on their national character, and to avert the dangers that threaten the country.

Prickear is a politician of some talents, but greater credulity, and as his thirst for news is great, so he believes without discrimination every story, whether true or false, probable or miraculous. He is acquainted with almost every sea captain, that sails from the port of his native city, and is the first who can detail the news of every late arrival. He had rather go without his dinner than his paper, and the loss of the latter takes away his appetite for the former. He has a correspondence with some person of almost every town in the Union, and is always acquainted with some members of congress, who give him a detail of their proceedings. He is a constant visitor of coffee houses, elections and town meetings. If he sees a collection of persons talking in the street, he cannot pass without mixing among them, and enquiring what is the subject. Accost him with the question, whether he has heard the news, and he immediately casts up a wild enquiring look. Tell him that war is declared, and he thinks he sees the enemy advancing in

hostile array. By means of his active but credulous curiosity he has acquired a great deal of hetorogenious knowledge and is fond of displaying it both in conversation and writing, and the subject of both is generally politicks. When his country is involved in difficulties witha foreign nation, he expects every day that it will be attacked and loudly recommends preparation for war. He solemnly assures his country, that the threatening aspect of affairs render it highly necessary to prepare for the worst and that statements of the hostile designs of their enemy are no longer to be doubted. He goes on to expatiate on the various resources of their national strength, and declares that if they will only with united exertion make use of the means which providence has placed in their hands, they are fully able to meet the difficulties of the crisis. His own chimeras he mistakes for the real dangers of the nation, and the solicitude which another nation may feel for her own rights, he construes into a hostile design, towards those of his own country.

LETTER XXVI.

I HAVE in none of my former letters, I believe, given thee any account of the slaves in this country. They have been purchased on the coast of Africa, brought here in large quantities and sold among the people. This traffick has lately been prohibited by a law of congress. The original features of this race are black colour, flat noses, thick lips, and notted hair; but in this country they are a mongrel breed, and exhibit almost every shade of feature from the African to the European. This, of course, has arisen from their venerial intercourse with the lower orders or debauched characters of the whites. The colour of some is hardly altered from the original African black, that of a great number is mulatto, and that of a few approach so near to the whites as hardly to admit of distinction.

These men are far more numerous in the southern, and western states, than in the northern and eastern, and their condition more wretched. In the former parts of the country they are all slaves; in the latter the greater number are free, and all, after they arrive at a certain age; In the former the laws in relation to the whites, and the blacks are founded on no reciprocity of rights, and permit an unbounded exercise of tyranny by the one over the other; in the latter the blacks in many respects enjoy equal priviledges with the whites, and are treated accordingly. When a Virginian goes into Pennsylvania, he is astonished at the licentious priviledges, and impudent behaviour of the blacks; when a Pennsylvanian goes into Virginia he is astonished at the debasing subjection, and tyrannical treatment of the same order.

The condition of the negroes in the western parts of the country is a melancholy scene. Sometimes they are knocked down in a fit of passion, and sometimes deliberately tied up and cut until the back is bruised and raw, and the blood trickles to the ground. Their food consists of but one article, an allowance of

meal, not enough to support them under the labour they are compelled to endure, and sometimes hardly enough to sustain life. Their cloathing, is coarse and scanty and neither sufficient to protect them from the winters' blast nor the summers' heat. They are called up by their overseer at the light of day....a few ragged remnants of cloathing around them, and drawn up and shivering with cold, they totter over the frosty or frozen ground to the place of their daily labour, some bare-footed and others with old shoes tied around their feet. Their labour throughout the day is unremitting, threats and stripes is their only portion, and hardly is time allowed them to eat their scanty meal. Returning to their miserable huts, their only covering is an old ragged blanket, their bed the bare earth. The insupportable tyranny of the master, or overseer sometimes compels them to run away; and their scanty allowance of food and cloathing sometimes induce them to steal, and in both cases they are stripped, and beaten in the vilest manner. The cruelty of these punishments have sometimes put a period to their miserable existence. The portion of time which they have for rest

are Sundays and nights after the close of their days labour. This time they sometimes employ in cultivating a small portion of ground in vegitables or procuring game by their traps or by hunting, and by this means they procure those scanty necessaries which their masters do not allow them. When they come in presence of their master their hat is taken off, their body bent, and their words are uttered in a timid and humble tone.

It has been said, that the holders of slaves are, in every country, the same, which is no doubt true, but not to render the picture too melancholy I must observe, that as the characters of men vary from each other, the conduct of some towards their servants will be marked with humanity rather than tyranny. In many parts of the country, indeed, the number of slaves owned by one master is often so great, his land so poor and his system of farming so bad, that if he had the disposition he has not the means to cloathe and feed them well. In this case they are besides left to the tyranny of overseers and if the master even possess a degree of humanity they can expect no protection from him. Where the number

owned by one master, is small and he has the care of them they are not generally treated cruelly.

In their mental faculties, I believe this this race are inferior to the whites. The native African is also inferior to the mulatto. With respect however to that degree of improvement of which their genius may be susceptible or their capacity for the higher branches of literature there is, perhaps, no criterion upon which to form a rational conjecture. The number of those among them who have received an education is extremely few, and this very imperfect. In a whole nation where science too is generally diffused, a great genius is not always to be found. That the blacks should not have exhibited any striking proofs of intelligence from the opportunities they have had is not surprising, but it would have been very surprising had the contrary taken place. Who knows but did they possess the same civil privileges and literary advantages that the whites do, philosophers, poets and orators might arise among them equal to those of this or any other country, to those either of ancient or modern times.

There is a wide difference between the condition of the negroes in towns, and those in the country. In towns their labour is lighter and their treatment better. Many of them are dressed superior to the lower class of the whites, and in place of that humble appearance to be noted among the negroes of the the country, they have quite a self important air. If in this respect there is any difference between the male and female, the former has more pomp, and the latter more impudence.

I have sometimes been diverted by the desire evinced by the negroes in town, to copy the manners of the whites. In one of my evening walks, I passed two blacks at the time they were accosting each other. They were dressed quite sprucely, with ruffle shirt, silk stockings, &c. and had all the ceremony of courtiers. One had a snuff box in his hand, which he presented to the other, recommending its superior qualities, of which the other took a pinch with a profound bow; walking down street, they entered into conversation. "Well sir", says one, "how does your worldly affairs seem to prosper." "Oh don't utter a word on that subject sir, I assure

you the embargo has almost ruined me." "Pshaw," exclaimed the other "where is your patriotism; you know, as citizens, we must submit to the orders of government." "True, very good reasoning, but my finances are dislocated, I begin to fear I shall have to stop payment." "Bear up philosophy sir, philosophy is a grand thing." In this strain their conversation proceeded, I despair of giving you any impression of the amusement it afforded me. The number of new coined words they had, together with their pompous and ceremonious manner, rendered it truly ludicrous, and diverting.

LETTER XXVII.

I HAVE been so long a wanderer on the great globe; I have witnessed human nature in such various points of view; I have seen such a variety of human institutions; and have been so long immersed in the reflections which such objects are calculated to awaken, that you will hardly be able to recognize in my letters any traits of the Chinese character. But this circumstance will be easily accounted for, and to thy expansive soul, above the shackles of vulgar and local prejudices, will be a subject of delight. It was from thy luminous instructions that I first received the divine impulse of a citizen of the world, and it is this impulse which has lead me through tracts which

my memory is now scarcely competent to trace. I feel like one who had been priviledged to wander through the solar system and view, successively, the different bodies, which compose it, and when he looks down to his diminutive earth floating in the infinity of space, he can hardly believe that it ever did, bound the sphere of his action. He only is worthy the name of man who can look through the world and say, my attachment, my feelings, my ideas are not confined to this district of territory, or to that; who can look through the human species and feel the effusions of love for all and none in particular. Why should our solicitude for the welfare of man be confined by rivers, by wilderness, by imaginary lines, or by oceans? Why should our feelings be shut up within imaginary districts when nothing but infinity can set bounds to the flight of our ideas? The human mind has soared through the solar system, has determined the bulk, the order, the relations, and flight of the planets; and why should our feelings, the noblest part of our nature, be confined to one diminutive spot? Oh, awake ye sons of the

earth from your torpid and contracted ideas and become sensible of the dignity of your nature and your rank in the creation! Throw aside your national pride and haughtiness, the destructive fire arms and murdering sword, and let nations embrace each other in friendship and love. Let the destroying implements of war be thrown together in one consuming blaze, and on their ruins, let the eternal temple of peace be erected. Successive generations shall fall prostrate before it and admire the sublime and glorious resolution. Men would then no longer meet to murder each other, but would be employed in the cultivation of the earth before continually dyed with human gore. The poor would no longer be torn from their helpless, unprotected families to imbrue their hands in innocent blood. Why ye callous sons of the earth, would you smile at these reflections which you would call extravagant because you cannot feel them. Think you that those who are governed by the divine impulse of general philanthropy would exchange it for the contemptible pleasure which you may derive from the sordid concerns in which you are

immersed...think you that they would for the mines of Peru? Oh! how much you undervalue the dignity of human nature if such be your ideas. Whether, in our sympathy for the joy or sorrow of our fellow men, nature has infused some sacred drops which tell us the divinity of virtue.

If I can be supposed to feel an attachment for any particular country, it is certainly that in which I drew my first breath, and which is honoured by thy noble spirit; but this attachment I believe to be uncontaminated by any contracted prejudices of opinion. Of the countries through which I travel, my attachment is successively fixed on that in which I last take up my residence. While I am engaged in inspecting the manners of the people, and tracing the excellencies and defects of their institutions, it is impossible but that I should feel drawn towards them, and that my feelings as well as my ideas should be called into action. Never do I leave a country without shedding a tear on its soil, taking of it a pathetick farewell, and imploring for it the protection of heaven. Ah! if my

wishes could make the world happy, it should be a paradise. I confess however, that neither my feelings nor ideas are always bounded by the country in which I reside. Often does my imagination retrace the steps I have past, and hover over countries formerly the object of my solicitude. Often would the strength of my feelings persuade me that I see armies engaged, the earth dyed with flowing blood, and fields groaning beneath the dying and the dead. I hear the cries of the wounded, and the groans of the dying. I see thousands of mutilated beings, deprived of the use of their limbs, and destined to be the victims of pain and infirmity, during the remnant of their lives. Nor does this scene limit half the evils of war. How many poor families are under the burthen of taxes, reduced to distress to support destructive wars! How pitiable to see the helpless widow deprived of the last, the coarsest necessaries of life...of the only bed perhaps on which she had been accustomed to rest her wearied limbs. Behold her children clinging around her for bread, while all that she can give is the tears which flow copiously from

her eyes. Behold the vacant stare which she fixes on her offspring, now casts a look to heaven, gives a deep sigh, and seems to say "Oh kind providence take us from this miserable world." Ye rulers of nations, these, these are the effects of your destructive wars! Is it at this expence that your national pride, and ambition must be gratified! On ye rich, and ye proud, satiated with luxu y, and at a loss how to dispose of your time; how little do you consider that your inactivity and your pleasure are purchased at the expence of the labour, and pa gs, of the poor. They produce the wealth which you enjoy; they bear your burthens, and you repay them with a haughty contempt. While you sit under your magnificent walls, surrounded with costly furniture, the poor have hardly a hut sufficient to protect them from the piercing wind, the driving snow, or the overwhelming torrent. While you sit down to your spacious table, covered with dishes of luxury, and glittering decorations; the half famished poor sit down to their oaken table, and scanty meal, and hardly is their fare over before they ar hurried

away to the labour of the day. While you repose on your bed of down, surrounded by curtains of silk; they have little more than the damp unwholesome earth, on which to rest their wearied limbs. While you are cloathed in attire of pompous and attractive materials, they are hardly secured from the scorching heat of the summer, or the piercing cold of the winter. While you are sitting by your comfortable fire, they are trudging hrough the snow, or shivering in the cold with their axe in their hands. While you are indolently reposing on your cool sopha they are labouring in the parched and dusty earth, and sweating beneath the meridian beams. In reality, when I view the unremitting labour and astonishing exertions of this active class of men, it excites not only my gratitude but my admiration. How little are the sons of indolence capable of such exertions! Should one of them, by any accident, be reduced to the necessity of depending on his own bodily exertions, how poorly would he be able to sustain his situation? One day of such labour as the active poor endure through life, would

derange the nerves and muscles of an indolent man to such a degree, that he would hardly recover for weeks or months. Why, in any point of view, then, should the poor be the object of our contempt? If they are useful, let us respect them; but if they are unfortunate, let us pity them. Were we to look upon them with these sentiments it would greatly ameliorate the hardship of their condition; and were we to respect them according to their merit, it would excite their laudable exertions to deserve the good opinion of society. The applause or approbation of others is the chief stimulous to every generous exertion; but what encouragement is given to the poor when they are condemned in the mass, and merit is neither noticed nor respected?

My travels, my friend, have been protracted beyond the period which I supposed would end them; but they are now nearly brought to a close. This country is, probably, the last that I shall ever visit with the curiosity of a traveller. I look forward, with anxious hope, to the day when, through the interposition of Providence, I may land in my native country,

converse familiarly with those friends who, amidst all my wanderings, have ever been uppermost in my thoughts, view again the scenes of my early youth, and finally spend the remnant of my days in philosophick contemplation. ADIEU!

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